POVERTY and CLOSING the GAP
Adastra
RESEARCH CONSULTANCY PROJECTS

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Foreword

Closing the educational achievement gap for children from disadvantaged backgrounds remains a pressing national priority. The 2016 White Paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere, is built on the principles of ensuring equality and excellence for all children, and rightly demands the opportunity for all pupils to reach their full potential, irrespective of where they live in the country.
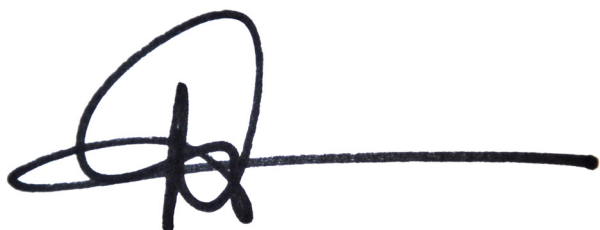
At Bishop Grosseteste University we are proud of our outstanding reputation and heritage of training teachers for over 150 years. Following the granting of full university status in 2012, and the launch of our 5 year strategy in 2014, we are now embarking on an exciting new phase of our development. Building upon our successful 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) entry, in which some of our research was recognised as 'world-leading' , we are now seeking to further extend our reputation and influence in research. To that end we are investing in academic staff, cultivating a new Centre for Public Policy and Professional Practice in Education, securing funding to undertake national and international research projects, and delivering consultancy for international Ministries of Education. A fundamental principle which underpins all our teaching and research is the integration of theory and practice, and this principle is vividly exemplified within all the research consultancy projects.

Our longstanding successes in teacher training are founded upon the strength of our partnership with schools and educational settings. A key strand, that links our research ambitions with our commitment to teacher education, is the

engagement in research consultancy and action research with partnership schools. The following reports all embed this approach of teachers working alongside researchers, integrating theory with practice, and focusing upon school-specific issues. Moreover, they also all represent excellent examples of how research can have genuine impact; impacting ultimately the prospects and life chances of young people. At the heart of our partnership is a focus on learners and learning, which the projects here also clearly share, alongside their key contribution in helping to close the educational attainment gap.

Specifically, the research projects will enable the individual schools to develop further good practice, for the benefit of their own pupils, but also with potential applicability to other schools and settings. Furthermore, it is hoped they may motivate and inspire other teachers or schools to embark upon action research projects, driving further improvements in teaching and learning. Finally, for the individual teachers involved, the experience will hopefully stimulate an ongoing theory-practice dialogue and provide impetus for further CPD and/or action research.

Consequently, I am delighted to invite you to read the following reports; reports which showcase how educational research and school-university partnerships can collectively help to transform the prospects of our young people.

Dr Nick Gee

Adastra Primary Partnership

The Adastra Primary Partnership

The Adastra Primary Partnership at present consists of 6 schools-one primary academy, three primary schools, one junior and one infant school. However, it is set to expand to bring in other schools who share the same challenge; and also the expertise of increasing progression and narrowing attainment gap for white working class pupils with a particular focus on increasing the opportunities for future success in education and employment.

Members:

The Sir Donald Bailey Academy	Newark
Ramsden Primary School	Carlton in Lindrick, Worksop
Abbey Hill Primary School	Kirkby in Ashfield
Jacksdale Primary School	Jacksdale
Hallcroft Infant School	Retford
Forest View Junior School	Ollerton

The group are involved in conducting a number of action research projects, with the support of Bishop Grosseteste University, and have a disciplined approach regarding innovation.

In order to focus on what the partnership believes are significant factors affecting outcomes for white British pupils, the partnership has divided child poverty into key aspects:
• material poverty;
• emotional poverty;
• poverty of experience;
• poverty of language; and
• poverty of aspiration.
The group are investigating strategies and ideas for minimising the impact of such poverty on individual children.

The approach of the Adastra Primary Partnership is one of collaboration between equal partners, working in similar contexts, but with one shared ambition to identify the best and most effective strategies to address this long standing national and regional issue.

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RESEARCH CONSULTANCY REPORT -
ABBEY HILL

On behalf of ADASTRA Primary Partnership
For Abbey Hill Primary and Nursery School.
Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Notts

DEVELOPING HANDWRITING SKILLS
Summary of Findings from Professional
Conversations with Staff in Pre-School,
Nursery, Y1 & Y2

Antony Luby
January 2016

English has a pre-eminent place in education and in society. A high-quality education in English will teach pupils to speak and write fluently so that they can communicate their ideas and emotions to others... **All the skills of language are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to** speak, read and **write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised.** [Emphasis added] (DfE 2013: 3)

The acquisition of literacy skills is pre-eminent within England's national curriculum; and the development of children's handwriting skills is a prime task for all teachers in both nursery and primary schools. A concern for this over the last few years within Abbey Hill Primary and Nursery School is evident from comments made in the professional conversations with staff in Pre-school, Nursery, Y1 & Y2 e.g.

▶ 'There are long-term handwriting problems.'
▶ 'There is a large variation in pupils' handwriting skills.'
▶ 'Foundation reports[1] generally show weakness with respect to handwriting skills.'
▶ 'Data from boys' handwriting has been a prompt; topic has been discussed before e.g. performance targets; school plan...'
▶ 'Been on the agenda for the last few years.'
▶ 'Starting from a very low base. Tracking 2 year olds from Notts Council[2] showed children at a significant risk of delay.'

Likewise, it is clear that the school has been taking measures to address perceived difficulties with the development of handwriting skills e.g.

▶ 'Handwriting has gotten better over the last few years. Teaching for handwriting is more specific e.g. handwriting within phonics.'
▶ 'X years at school. Handwriting has been consistently highlighted as a weakness and there is much focus on handwriting as it is in school development plan.'

That handwriting is a particular problem and has been noted by 'outsiders' who visit the school such as Ofsted (2014: 4) who comment that:

The children join the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are well below those typically found. They are particularly low in speaking and listening and in reading and writing.

This weakness is also evident to 'insiders' who come to work in the school from another educational institution e.g. 'In comparison with "Othershire" school[3] in a working class area there is a noticeable difference in development of the pupils.' It is also evident to staff who come to Abbey Hill from a different work-related background e.g. 'immediately noticed that some children have:

• A physical lack of development, curved backs from pushchairs;
• Heads too large in comparison with their bodies with a lack of balance e.g. head tilting forward; and
• Poor language development e.g. unable to utter broken sentences or, indeed, even single words.'

These perceptive comments are indicative of what might be termed 'a knowledge explosion' amongst the staff. This has been triggered in the Primary School by new SATS testing in 2015 a higher % of marks allocated. In the Foundation Stage a trigger has been the opening of the Pre-School for the arrival of 2 year olds in April 2015. A subsequent emphasis on teacher professional development has led to a greater awareness and understanding of the underlying problems with regard to a lack of development in children's handwriting skills.

Teachers attribute some of this new understanding to in-service provided by specialist Paul Young that has been described as both "informative" and "amazing" - with some staff becoming enthused and spontaneously talking about some of the techniques displayed. That such in-service training has a positive impact is very important as the type of professional development for teachers regarding handwriting development '...can have significant impacts on children's writing that can endure for at least 2 years' (Jones & Christensen 2012: 223). Members of staff cite evidence of this impact through becoming more aware of the links between physical development and handwriting skills; and, in particular, they identified the following:
- Visual clues for lack of gross motor and fine motor skills;
- Tripod grip an example of fine motor skills but whole hand grip is gross motor and use of the latter indicates a lack of the former;
- Beanbag brain exercising game;

1 i.e. Foundation stage data
2 i.e. Nottinghamshire County Council Two Year Tracker
3 Pseudonym to preserve anonymity

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- Importance of crawling for proper development of balance; and
- Story conventions are necessary and that for literacy physical skill is required.

Such professional development of understanding amongst teaching staff and teaching assistants is commendable; and of particular significance given that 'Most studies of children's handwriting acquisition focused on the elementary school years, and there is scarce information about the development of writing skills before that time' (Vilageliu et al 2012: 7).This quote is extracted from a highly authoritative volume of work that comprises '...an overview of a large number of research programmes spread across 15 European countries...' (Torrance 2012: xxix) This suggests that whilst Abbey Hill school is 'at the beginning of a journey' – this journey may be of interest to not only other members of the ADASTRA Primary Partnership; but also to networks such as The National Literacy Trust (see http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/).

The school has taken some initial footsteps on this journey as evidenced by a greater awareness of the influence of home background on children's lack of development in handwriting skills e.g.
- A lack of encouragement at home;
- Technological age;
- Lack of literacy at home;
- Wrong grip from pupils;
- Lack of access to basics such as pens and paper.

Abbey Hill School has some of the tools necessary to equip staff on this journey e.g. measuring progress through tracking tools such as Primary ECaT (Every Child a Talker) whereby within their first 15 hours at the Nursery the children have a progress check that establishes a baseline. Members of staff are currently implementing activities and practices – both old and new – to enable the children to make good progress e.g.

- Undertaking 10 minute daily activities such as 'bean-bags';
- Reducing availability of tablets as they are a 'draw' for children but they impair development of keyboarding skills;
- Using Storyteller with props to engage children and painting activities to help to develop gross motor skills;
- Encouraging use of basic mark-making i.e. blank paper on easel and children mark-make independently;
- Updating a chart in planning folder to measure progress.

Already, members of staff are making interim professional judgements that some progress in the development handwriting skills is being established. They cite evidences such as children:
- Displaying enjoyment of writing by spending time mark-making and less time (by boys) on construction toys;

- Showing progress by not using a name card; and
- Improving their handwriting in terms of shape and sizing. Additionally, across the school both teachers and TAs notice incorrect letter formation and children then use Practice Pages to practise correct letter information – some children do this voluntarily and sometimes with a partner.

This improvement in handwriting is consistent with the view of a member of staff that 'Over a period of 5 years there has been a slow improvement evidenced through work-scrutinies e.g. neatness and presentation.' Some of this improvement can be attributed to the impact made by the Reading Recovery in Y1 and Y2 that had 'a big push in terms of staff development at the beginning' followed by a 'slow burn' over the years. Abbey Hill School has experience of success with a number of initiatives and this is a good predictor for success with regard to other initiatives:

Switch On is TA-led individual daily reading and writing intervention for children of lower ability from Y1-Y6 for 20 minutes. There are 3 TAs in school currently delivering this intervention.
Read Every Wednesday from 8.30am for Y1 and Y2. Informal help from parents with Reading Book where they are given 'soft advice' as how to read a book with their children.

One initiative that could benefit from further attention is Write Dance. A workshop was attended by the Literacy leader and a TA. Comprising Movement and Dance to develop gross motor skills > fine motor skills this appears to hold much promise. The school should give serious consideration to the offer from an expert teacher in another District school who is happy for Abbey Hill staff to observe Write Dance with her class.

The school is well placed to take forward development in children's handwriting skills. There is a depth of knowledge within the school staff as evidenced by the Training Day that focused on theory; and to which the staff responded with 'Thought showers' and a welter of post-its that unpicked the 'Big Bad Wolf lived in a wood' challenge. These thought provoking questions merit repetition and emphasis i.e.

What do we do to stimulate language development?
What does a child need to have experienced before they can write the following sentence:
 o 'Once upon a time a big bad wolf lived in the wood'
Why do our children find it so difficult to write independently?

These questions could usefully be adopted by other schools as a starting point for discussion among staff.
A recent meeting of Key Stage 1 staff also evidenced this growing awareness among staff regarding strategies for the development of handwriting skills. Activities to

improve gross/fine motor skills such as weaving, threading, sorting, and using tweezers were discussed. The importance of independent handwriting activity being '...structured so that children are unable to produce and practise incorrect letter formation e.g. through the use of structured letter boards' was stressed. Similarly, agreement was reached about 'The need for consistency in "letter patter" i.e. the way staff describe how letters are formed...' (Abbey Hill 2015) This growing confidence and understanding within Abbey Hill School is further evidenced through the development of its own framework by which to chart progress regarding the development of handwriting skills; and this, too, may be of interest to other schools within the ADASTRA Primary Partnership and elsewhere (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1

4 Strands for Development of Handwriting Skills

Physical

Communication and Language

Phonics

Writing Conventions

In addition to looking inwards and reflecting upon their own experiences the members of school staff also look outward as evidenced by participation within the ADASTRA Primary Partnership; and the collaborative and mentoring relationships established with other schools in Warsop, Eastwood & Mansfield. Indeed, one of the school aims is to make noticeable progress through interventions from both teachers and outside experts.

The most valuable 'outside experts' are, of course, the parents; and it is generally acknowledged that parental involvement is a difficult aim to achieve. The school, though, has the potential to make good progress in this area e.g.
- Christmas Crafts which has just started has seen more parents coming in to the school and taking an interest and socialising with children and other parents;
- Keepsake box for school-based items that are of interest and/or use at home;
- Forthcoming Parent & Toddler group that will use 'drop-ins' to increase parental awareness of handwriting skills and other activities;
- Munch 'n Mingle that is planned for the Spring term and which will heighten parental awareness of the availability of simple, cheap yet healthy snacks; and
- Grandparents' Day that will include an art based' family tree' activity and a writing based task.

This higher level of parental involvement does raise some issues. For example, whilst collaborating to produce diva lamps it became evident that some parents have high levels of illiteracy. Through such collaboration members of staff have become even more aware of the plight of some of their pupils e.g. some parents being dependent upon food banks. Allied with this, some children don't even have toys with which to play. This raises the issue of social justice.

Given that all main UK political parties are committed to social justice – although each party perceives this in a different way – it is not something from which Abbey Hill School or the ADASTRA Primary Partnership need shy away from. North of the border the Scottish Teachers' Standards have professional values at their core - with the 1st of these being "Social Justice" i.e. 'In their Professional Actions – teachers are expected to '...develop and apply political literacy and political insight in relation to professional practice, educational change and policy development.' (GTCS 2012: 10) Evidence for this political literacy and insight with respect to classroom practices is, of course, found south of the border too. Brighton teacher Fran Haynes (2015: 10) presents a compelling account[4] of the pedagogical approach of exploratory talk being '...crucial in enabling these silenced, disadvantaged students to have a space for their voices to be heard and valued, an experience that could go far beyond the classroom and into the realities of the students' social worlds.' She is not alone in seeking to employ classroom pedagogy as a means to an end of attaining social justice.

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4   This research was conducted with Y9 pupils on the outskirts of Brighton in a school that '...draws most of its students from the local residential estate, which is an area of extreme social and economic deprivation: NEET figures are almost three times the city average, almost 90% of the students are of White British heritage, and the number of students receiving free school meals is well above the national average' (Haynes 2015: 11).

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However, if developing political literacy and insight seems somewhat uncomfortable then one need only think of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In order to attain self-actualization, whereby a child achieves her or his potential; the physiological needs of the child require to be addressed first. After this is "Safety" – which includes security of resources, employment, family, etc. Ultimately, then, all of these needs require to be addressed; and so all areas of child development fall within the purview of nursery and primary school teachers and teaching assistants.

In conclusion then; with regard to the development of handwriting skills the members of staff of Abbey Hill School have embarked upon a remarkable journey of discovery with a promising yet unknown destination. It is to be hoped that they will not make this journey alone. In this regard both Abbey Hill School and the ADASTRA Primary Partnership may wish to take note of two recent reports from the National College for Teaching and Leadership. The 2nd report offers encouragement to '…develop practices which are led and informed by schools themselves, bringing them an extra level of autonomy to pursue issues and change initiatives that are relevant to their own setting and context' (Hammersley-Fletcher et al 2015: 5). How this might best be achieved is the focus of the 1st report that speaks of "an essential triad of pedagogy, professional development and leadership" in which:

> Pedagogy is at the core and leadership and professional development are there to ensure that pedagogy is great. But great pedagogy also challenges and inspires leadership and professional development to new heights (Stoll 2015: 21).

In order to address this triad of challenges succinct advice, drawn from experience and reflection upon a two-and-a-half year national project, involving 98 teaching schools, is outlined in 10 messages (Stoll 2015: 18ff). As a partnership ADASTRA may be well placed to take on board such advice; and, indeed, to develop its autonomy with respect to evidence-based teaching.

Adastra Primary Partnership

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RESEARCH CONSULTANCY REPORT -
JACKSDALE

On behalf of ADASTRA Primary Partnership
For Jacksdale Primary and Nursery School,
Notts

POVERTY OF LANGUAGE
Summary of Findings from Professional
Conversations with Staff

Antony Luby with Elizabeth Farrar
January 2016

JACKSDALE NURSERY and PRIMARY SCHOOL

Jacksdale Nursery and Primary School is the 2nd of the 6 schools within the ADASTRA Primary Partnership to participate in a research consultancy project that addresses one of the 5 areas of Child Poverty identified by the ADASTRA Primary Partnership i.e.

- Material;
- Emotional;
- Language;
- Experience; and
- Aspiration.

The aim of the school is to address all of these 5 areas over a period of approx. two and a half years. In the 2015 autumn term the Senior Leadership Team and the school staff produced a document *Exploring the concept of 'Poverty' and 'Spoken Language at Jacksdale Primary School* (Jacksdale 2015). The present focus is 'Poverty of Language' and the members of staff have identified 9 criteria under the heading 'What does Poverty of Language mean to us?' The staff have also identified a further 5 criteria under the heading 'What can we do about it?' A further 12 criteria have been identified with regard to 'What can we do around the school?' and 15 criteria for 'What can we put into the curriculum?'

After an initial meeting with the Head Teacher the lead researcher made a brief presentation to the school staff at the end of November 2015. In January 2016 the lead researcher conducted a series of 45 minute professional conversations with 8 members of the teaching staff (3 paired conversations with staff + 2 single conversations); and the co-researcher had a further exploratory meeting with the Head Teacher.

Setting the context

The meeting between the co-researcher and the Head Teacher in January 2016 helps to set the context. It was discussed how the school has identified from the 'on entry' Nursery data that children come in with very weak communication skills. The school believes that parent-child communication is being greatly diminished. They have noticed that parents are actively discouraging talk through the prolonged and constant use of dummies. I-pads, or other devices, are similarly used with the intention being to keep children quiet. In recent years the school has been teaching children all the traditional nursery rhymes and songs, when in prior years it would have been taken for granted that children would already know these. These issues are affecting whole cohorts, not just groups.

The school believes that the children are lacking in experiences, which then feeds into the lack of language. In order to try to address this problem, there are plans to use the National Trust's publication "50 Things To Do Before You're 11¾." They are going to divide the activities between year groups and the children will get to undertake the activities in school time. This includes things like creating some wild art, making a mud pie and exploring inside a tree. These are activities which children from more affluent backgrounds might reasonably be expected to do at home with their parents, but this is not the case for the children in this community. The school feels that the increase in sporting activities, facilitated by the PE and sport premium, has helped to raise the profile of the school, both with the parent body and within the local community.

Other initiatives to help to develop the children's language skills include the encouragement of social interaction. The children have been taught how to respond appropriately when someone greets them by asking how they are, and to reinforce this they are given a manners award in weekly assemblies. The school's intention is to instil private school values in the pupils. They are attempting to match the input which is provided by parents at other local, more affluent, schools.

The school ensures that drama and role play are utilised frequently in lessons. Class assemblies and Christmas productions also give the children the opportunity to stand up in front of others to speak, and so develop their confidence. As a further consequence of weak communication skills, and low parental input, the Year 1 phonics check results have been historically low – around 43%. Read, Write, Inc. has been introduced to replace Letters & Sounds and subsequently the pass rate for the check has risen dramatically to 88%. The school believes that this is due to the much greater emphasis that Read, Write, Inc. places on reading aloud. This scheme also matches letter sounds learnt in phonics sessions to children's reading books and has linked writing activities. Reading aloud, including reading out their own writing, is the element which the school believes has had the greatest positive impact on progress and attainment in this area.

The school has introduced 'Marvellous Me', which is a web based application that allows adults in school to send good news messages directly to parents' and carers' phones. The intention is to get parents more interested in what their children are learning, but also to encourage them to talk with their children about what they have been doing at school. Therefore messages such as, "Ask Freddie about his science experiment today" are being sent home. The application sends a 'Hi 5' back to the school to show that parents have received the message. The school reports that this has been highly effective, and they have received

thousands of 'Hi 5s' over the year. Also to encourage greater communication between children and parents as well as the school and parents, there have been open mornings when parents are invited into school to work alongside their children in lessons. Members of staff are working hard to encourage parents to get involved and work with the school. A further complication is that Jacksdale has a feeder infant school, so additional children join in Year 3. These pupils do not have the benefit of all the efforts that those joining Jacksdale from the start of Nursery have had and have to play catch up throughout Key Stage 2.

Research

Many of the points raised in the professional conversation between the co-researcher and the head teacher featured in the professional conversations between the lead researcher and the 8 members of the teaching staff. These professional conversations were semi-structured interviews comprising the following 4 questions:

- Your school has identified 9 criteria under the heading of 'What does Poverty of language mean to us?' Please explain which two or three are the most significant to you and why.
- The school has also identified 5 criteria with regard to 'What can we do about it?' Please explain with which (a) the school has been most successful and why; and (b) the school has been least successful and why.
- The staff identified 12 criteria with respect to 'What can we do around the school?' Giving examples, please outline those criteria with the school has been (a) most successful; and (b) least successful. Why do you think this is?
- The staff identified 15 criteria about 'What can we put into the curriculum?' Please give examples from your classroom practices and evaluate their success or otherwise.

Research Question 1

Your school has identified 9 criteria under the heading of 'What does Poverty of language mean to us?' Please explain which two or three are the most significant to you and why.

From Jacksdale (2015: 3) the school had identified the following criteria:

Poverty of Language - *What do these mean to us?*

- Inappropriate talk e.g. swearing
- Lack of language experience e.g. reading stories
- Being talked at rather than talked to
- Being ignored
- Lack of educational visits
- Speech & Language therapy not accessed
- Limited SALT
- Manners
- EAL

The staff indicate clearly that the most significant criterion is that of *lack of language experience*. Many of the children aren't sufficiently experiencing the reading of stories at home; neither reading independently nor being encouraged by parents. Indeed, with regard to reading homework, some of the reading organisers are returned 'empty' on a regular basis. This substantiates, in part, the claim made that there is 'A strong correlation between use of personal organiser and reading abilities.' Other factors include a lack of learning traditional nursery rhymes. Most significant is the comment that when children are asked 'What did you do at the weekend? Christmas?' this often elicits a response of 'Just played with X-box.' This detrimental impact of technology links with other aspects such as Poverty of Experience and Poverty of Aspiration.

Other manifestations of lack of language experience are that some of the children are unused to questioning; and the staff report that they have to check for understanding through children's body language. More worryingly, a small minority of pupils are rude in tone with their parents and fail to acknowledge maxims such as 'Respect elders' and 'Treat others as you would like to be treated.' For a minority of teachers there appears to be a concerning trend that, over time, standards have dropped slightly – but these subjective observations run contrary to the progress noted by Ofsted (2015).

The other most significant criterion is that of 'Manners' – and there is a positive reaction to this from staff. Despite the negative comment above the staff believe that 'We're starting to get a handle on it.' Indeed, some affirm that 'Manners are definitely, massively improving.' This improvement is being put into effect through modelling, demonstrations, reinforcement and 'everyone doing the same thing.' Some teachers are quite firm with their pupils; interrupting inappropriate behaviour and 'banning' repeated use of certain innocuous but irritating words e.g. "What?" This is replaced with "Pardon" and the children peer correct. This 'banning' is partly a game and the incidence of "What?" has greatly declined. Evidence for the overall success of these strategies is affirmed by Ofsted (2015: 1) who record in their key findings that:

> Pupils are extremely polite and well behaved in lessons and around school. They play and work together harmoniously and are proud of their school.

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Research Question 2

The school has also identified 5 criteria with regard to 'What can we do about it?' Please explain with which (a) the school has been most successful and why; and (b) the school has been least successful and why.

From Jacksdale (2015: 4) the school staff has identified the following:

- Whole school 'Speak Out' competition;
- S&L therapy accessed;
- Workshops – Surestart;
- Time 2 Talk 1-1; and
- Nature walks and talks – National Trust membership.

Whilst the nature walk was cited as a very successful activity the most benefit has derived from Time 2 Talk 1-1. Some teachers note that they spend more time thinking about children's needs and listen more to children: this can take place during breaks, snack-times as they make a conscious effort to deliberately make time for their pupils. They believe that this effort is rewarded as it produces more contributions from the children. The teachers affirm that children's behaviour seems to be improving as they verbalise feelings which, sometimes, they have to write down first. Often, there is better, improved feedback from children as there is more 'child-speak' within teacher-pupil conversations.

Teachers are adopting different approaches to Time 2 talk 1-1. One teacher uses an informal approach to selecting 1 or 2 pupils during registration; and then spends the 20 minute time allocation for an in-depth chat - often in the corridor. Whilst this is taking place, other pupils are doing different 'morning jobs' with a TA present in the classroom. Two other members of staff employ the strategy of 'Puppet & Puppeteer' in paired conversations at Registration with the topics being set by the teacher. Given that the teachers were unaware of these differences in practice; then this contrast of approaches may offer the school an opportunity to develop its 'understanding of evidence-based teaching' (Hammersley-Fletcher et al 2015). It could prove interesting to research, compare and analyse these contrasting uses of Time 2 talk 1-1.

Furthermore, if the ADASTRA Primary Partnership is to develop further as a 'self-improving school system' (Stoll 2015) then the Puppet & Puppeteer strategy offers an excellent activity with which to begin. As indicated in Luby (2015, 2016a) paired conversations are a medium by which to develop the dialogic skills of both cumulative talk and exploratory talk. Cumulative talk entails pupils '…build[ing] positively but uncritically on what the other has said'; and exploratory talk encourages children to '…engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas' (Mercer 1995: 104). Given that the ADASTRA Primary Partnership is seeking and developing activities, strategies and pedagogies that address issues of poverty for disadvantaged children; then it is worthwhile to consider that:

> …it seems possible that this type of pedagogical approach (exploratory talk) could be crucial in enabling these silenced, disadvantaged students to have a space for their voices to be heard and valued, an experience that could go far beyond the classroom and into the realities of the students' social world. Haynes (2015: 10)

Although the seaside city of Brighton, where Haynes conducted her research, does not immediately strike one as being comparable with the villages and towns of the East Midlands; there is a high degree of 'relatability' (Bassey 1981, 2001). Haynes (2015: 11) informs us that her research was conducted on the outskirts of the city in a school that:

> …draws most of its students from the local residential estate, which is an area of extreme social and economic deprivation: NEET figures are almost three times the city average, almost 90% of the students are of White British heritage, and the number of students receiving free school meals is well above the national average.

Indeed, one only has to access the online Indices of Deprivation 2015 explorer [see http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html] and examine the neighbourhood codes of Brighton and Hove 025A-F; in order to quickly ascertain that there are large swathes of Brighton that are deprived. Unlike the East Midlands, the South Coast is not guilty of having '…persistently under-performed' (Busby 2016) and so, perhaps, there is something to be learned from their experiences.

In terms of under-performance with regard to the above criteria there are two which receive a passing mention: the whole school Speak Out competition and the Surestart workshops – perhaps they have yet to take place.

Research Question 3

The staff identified 12 criteria with respect to 'What can we do around the school?' Giving examples, please outline those criteria with the school has been (a) most successful; and (b) least successful. Why do you think this is?

From Jacksdale (2015: 4) these criteria are as follows:

- Expect good manners – challenge when this doesn't happen;
- Use of adult names showing respect + Use of children's name showing respect;
- Talk to children in other classes during the day;
- Make eye contact;
- "Good morning – how are you?" conversation;
- Staff modelling how to interact with each other;
- Level of formality depending on the situation;
- Head Boy + Head Girl;
- Children showing visitors;
- Meeting and greeting at school events;
- Spatial awareness in social situations – volume of voice; and
- ADASTRA weekly award.

Almost all of these criteria received a favourable mention

throughout the professional conversations with staff. The only criterion not mentioned was that of 'spatial awareness'; and the one criterion mentioned unfavourably was that of Head Boy and Head Girl which, presumably, has yet to be addressed. It is noteworthy that, again, manners was particularly highlighted e.g. walking through doors for Assembly and noting the number of "thank you" spoken by the pupils. Most notably, though, it is perceived that this focus on manners is 'overflowing' into other criteria e.g. children are better enabled to hold conversations with each other and with members of staff and, indeed, parents – as the conversations now extend beyond a mere 'Thank You' and 'Please'. These improvements are founded upon a constant drilling of expectations; modelling by teacher and pupils; and there is now a stronger focus linked with curriculum expectations e.g. pupils voluntarily 'showing and telling'. Another notable feature was the desire expressed by some teachers that this improvement in mannerly behaviour should become 'second nature.' This is a noble aspiration.

Overall, in terms of teachers' responses to this question it did sometimes become muddled; as they were keen to discuss what was happening in their classrooms: and so to this question we now turn.

Research Question 4
The staff identified 15 criteria about 'What can we put into the curriculum?' Please give examples from your classroom practices and evaluate their success or otherwise.
According to Jacksdale (2015: 5) these criteria are:
- Learn more nursery rhymes (other languages too);
- Model how to hold a basic conversation;
- Talk for Writing;
- Role plays;
- Peers presenting to other classes / key stages / assemblies;
- Audio fact files onto website;
- Newsround – presenting news / sports / weather etc.;
- Planned story time;
- Chatterbox words – new vocabulary;
- Fashion shows / X-Factor / Jacksdale's Got Talent;
- Show & tell time;
- Interviews for school jobs – School Council / corridor & lunch-time monitors;
- Interviewing for research e.g. class newspaper;
- Directly teaching manners; and
- Teaching different languages.

There was little negative response here. It was recognised that there have been technical difficulties that prevent audio fact files being placed on the school website. The only other criticism was a concern expressed succinctly by one teacher that:

> I don't want them to lose their personalities through over-drilling [of manners]. I still want them to say "ay up me duck!"

Rather, the *mood music* was one of committed, enthusiastic and knowledgeable teachers who wished to share their classroom experiences and ideas. Dylan Wiliam, emeritus professor of educational assessment at UCL Institute of Education makes the claim that:

> Perhaps the most counterproductive idea in professional development over recent years has been that teachers need to share good practice – most teachers already have more good ideas than they can use in a lifetime. What they lack is time and support in putting their ideas into practice. In other words, professional development needs to focus on changing practice, rather than sharing practice; not knowledge giving, but habit changing. (TES 2016)

There is much merit in this claim; but a beginning point is that of being afforded the opportunity to share practices. As referred to above; some teachers, understandably, are unaware of colleagues' successful classroom practices: school life is just so busy. Although the senior leadership team is aware of progress in many curricular areas through the November appraisal process; this awareness is not so prominent within the teaching staff. Perhaps time set aside at staff meetings to specifically share these experiences, ideas and practices would be helpful. Hopefully, this could lead to more structured, evidence-based approaches to pedagogy within the school (see Buskist and Groccia 2011; Hammersley-Fletcher et al 2015; Petty 2006).

An interesting feature of the professional conversations with Jacksdale staff is that none are aware of the highly influential work by Professor John Hattie (2012) namely *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning*. This is particularly intriguing since, as outlined below, a recurrent theme of curricular innovation at Jacksdale is the making visible of pupils' learning. Perhaps, as a form of teacher professional development, a staff book club could be introduced within the school and with Hattie's book first on the reading list[1]. Alternative reading that focuses on the links between poverty and language include academic papers by Leffel & Suskind (2013) concerning parent-directed intervention that addresses children's early language environments of low socio-economic status; and Vernon-Feagans et al (2012) that examines the relationship between early exposure to difficult households and poorer language.

In terms of the staff making learning visible it is hard to do justice to the many ideas and practices shared by the teachers – but we will try!
- *Drama* – regular daily use prior to writing tasks in order to develop pupils' imaginative vocabulary[2].
- *Heritage visit* – visit by Jacksdale heritage group in which children listened attentively and asked questions politely[3].
- *Homework* – designing activities that encourage parental involvement e.g. birthdays, measuring feet.

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1 Other schools within the ADASTRA Primary Partnership may be interested in doing likewise; and a good starting point is to choose from the list of *The 33 books every teacher should read* (TES 2016). Alternative reads include *Children, Their World, Their Education: final report and recommendations of the Cambridge Primary Review* edited by Robin Alexander; *The Tail: how England's schools fail one child in five – and what can be done* edited by Paul Marshall; and *The People: the rise and fall of the working class 1910-2010* by Selina Todd.
2 Although Ofsted (2015: 6) does caution that '...sometimes teachers concentrate on the imaginative content of pupils' writing at the expense [of] the amount or the correct use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.'
3 A strength of the school already noted by Ofsted (2015: 4).

- *Learning Partners* – weekly group re-organization promotes the development of more relationships within the class and has enhanced the dynamics of group work.
- *Lollipop sticks* – using these to encourage children to express ideas and make suggestions.
- *Marvellous Me* – using open-ended questions and encouraging parent-child conversations at home – often prompted by photographs.
- *More 1-2-1s* - these have developed a growing confidence within pupils – staff have witnessed more examples of children using their initiative, especially 'quieter' children.
- *Peers presenting to other classes* – e.g. DARE presentation; Anti-Bullying week drama whereby children were encouraged to share thoughts with random partners and not just friends.
- *Peer explanations* e.g. Maths. Pupils display the beginnings of (Meta) learning-how-to-learn skills.
- *Pen-pals* – this link with a Buckinghamshire school encouraged children to communicate with peers.
- *Planets* – children collaborating to produce a script and then presenting to class.
- *Pye Hill Colliery* – visit to the colliery enabled and encouraged children to engage with adults in conversation about the history of the pit.
- *Role Plays* – such as the Great Fire of London have helped to develop pupils' confidence.
- *Self-Differentiation* – children choosing and being required to articulate choice for activity i.e. 'comfort – stretch – panic'.
- *Tongue Twisters* – encouraging children to use a loud voice; an expressive tone; to face the audience.

One of the few criteria not to receive a mention during the professional conversations was that of pupils developing the research skill of interviewing. If members of staff wish to develop a wider understanding of pupils as researchers then they could consult Bognar and Zovko (2008); Leitch et al (2007); or Mearns et al (2014). If the school itself wishes to develop overall with regard to research then an excellent, readable and very recent introduction to this topic is a blog by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER 2016). Also, if the ADASTRA Primary Partnership wishes to develop research expertise then it may consider the example set by Hutchesons' Research Centre that entails a school '… work[ing] with external organisations…' (Wilkins 2016: 35).

Emerging themes

Having now conducted 2 case studies at Abbey Hill and Jacksdale it is pertinent to make some observations for consideration by the ADASTRA Primary Partnership.

Relatability

An advantage of the six-school primary partnership is that it is fairly straightforward to identify relatable features. From reading both reports one can determine which situations and strategies being employed in another school are similar to those already being employed in one's own school. One can then make an informed judgement as to which strategies can readily be adopted or adapted within one's own school. That judgement is for each school to make for itself.

Creativity

For the lead researcher the most striking experience has been that of creativity from teacher colleagues. This is apparent both from documentation produced as a result of staff meetings and during professional conversations. This partly corroborates the above claim from Wiliam that '… most teachers already have more good ideas than they can use in a lifetime.' This pool of creativity needs to cherished, nurtured and shared. It may be time for senior managers within each school to determine how best this creativity can be shared within the partnership. The idea of a staff book club mooted above is just one idea.

Networking

In addition to networking across schools within the partnership it is becoming apparent that it would be beneficial to network *as a partnership*. The British Educational Research Association is establishing a Research Commission entitled *Poverty and Policy Advocacy* that comprises a series of six seminars to be held at different venues across the country. Attendance at one or more of these seminars would offer opportunities for networking to the ADASTRA Primary Partnership. Another route could be that of the Poverty & Education Network under the auspices of the Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA). Thinking more laterally, ADASTRA could consider forming alliances with other organisations experienced in countering poverty through innovative pedagogy – such as with the Brighton case study discussed above[4]. Additionally, ADASTRA could make a particular contribution to organisations like the Teacher Development Trust and/or the nascent College of Teaching (Luby 2016b).

Research

The value of stepping out of the classroom and into a good book or paper is profound. There are simple 'starter papers' such as *Equal Education* from Murphy (2016) who is an experienced head teacher – that challenge us to see equality within a wider framework of opportunity, outcome, inputs and value. In the same magazine, Professor Lumby (2016) of Southampton University depicts negatively the *Groundhog Day* experience of trying to close the attainment gap; and yet, positively, reaffirms that progress can be sustained through a cultural change in schools. Effecting cultural change to address issues of poverty may be achieved by the ADASTRA Primary Partnership conceiving itself to be a self-improving school system. Advice as how to create such a system can be found, amongst others, in the works of Rea et al (2015) and Stoll (2015).

4 Initial enquiries have been made with SERA and Sussex University, Brighton.

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RESEARCH CONSULTANCY REPORT -
The SIR DONALD BAILEY ACADEMY

On behalf of ADASTRA Primary Partnership
For Jacksdale Primary and Nursery School,
Notts

SPEAKING & LISTENING SKILLS
Summary of Findings from Professional
Conversations with Staff

Antony Luby with Elizabeth Farrar
April 2016

'The strengths of schools working alongside researchers in order to sharpen knowledge around the research process… is an effective way and supportive way to develop practices which are led and informed by schools themselves, bringing them an extra level of autonomy to pursue issues and change initiatives that are relevant to their own setting and context' (Hammersley-Fletcher et al, 2015: 5)

Introduction

This is the third in a series of reports from The School of Teacher Development (TD) at Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) Lincoln. The School of TD is developing a close relationship with the Nottinghamshire-based ADASTRA Primary Partnership that comprises 6 schools loosely united by their common bond of being located within 'white British working-class areas of underachievement'. This is evidenced by the following information from the national Index of Multiple Deprivation[1] about 'neighbourhoods of high deprivation[2]'.

- ▸ Abbey Hill NG17 7NZ – the school's catchment area includes neighbourhoods that are in the top 20% and top 30% of deprivation.
- ▸ Forest View NG22 9RJ - is sited within top 30% most deprived neighbourhoods but nearby Newark and Sherwood 001A is within top 10% most deprived areas.
- ▸ Hallcroft DN22 7QH - is sited within top 30% most deprived neighbourhoods but is not far from Bassetlaw 008A that is within top 20% most deprived areas.
- ▸ Jacksdale NG16 5JU - is sited within top 50% most deprived neighbourhoods but is close to Amber Valley 003B which is in top 10% most deprived areas.
- ▸ Ramsden S81 9DY - the housing scheme from which the majority of pupils are drawn is Bassetlaw 004A and this is in the top 10% most deprived areas.
- ▸ The Sir Donald Bailey Academy NG24 4EP - is sited within the top 10% most deprived neighbourhoods.

There is recognition within the ADASTRA Primary Partnership that the East Midlands is one of the geographical areas in England that '…ha[s] consistently under-performed' (Busby 2016)[3]; and all of the 6 schools are determined to address this issue of poverty and underachievement. In particular, ADASTRA has identified the following 5 areas:
- • Material Poverty;
- • Emotional Poverty;
- • Poverty of Language;
- • Poverty of Experience; and
- • Poverty of Aspiration.

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1 See http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html
2 Technically, 'neighbourhoods' are Lower-layer Super Output Areas. 'Users often take the most deprived 10 per cent or 20 per cent of neighbourhoods… as the group of highly deprived areas…' (DCLG 2015: 2)
3 This is based on the Social Market Foundation report Education Inequalities in England & Wales [see http://www.smf.co.uk/publications/educational-inequalities-in-england-and-wales/]

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Research methodology

As suggested by the opening quote from Hammersley-Fletcher et al (2015) the ADASTRA schools are '...pursu[ing] issues and change initiatives that are relevant to their own setting and context' i.e. poverty and underachievement. The role of the School of TD is to use research processes that enable the schools to become better informed about their current progress. In this instance the research process used is that of *professional conversations*. These conversations derive from the classic work of Stenhouse (1975: 157) who was concerned '...with the development of a self-critical subjective perspective [and] not with an aspiration towards an unattainable objectivity.' The development of such a self-critical subjective perspective on pedagogy can take place in isolation – through scholarship for example – but this perspective can be enhanced and strengthened to become '...inter-subjectively valid knowledge which is beyond the limitations of one knower' (Reason & Rowan 1981: 242)[4].

An illustration

The Sir Donald Bailey Academy is addressing the area of "Poverty of Language" and has identified 4 strands for developing "Speaking and Listening" – one of which is "Awareness of Audience." During a professional conversation one of the teachers spoke of how s/he helped to prepare pupils for presenting at school assemblies through paired discussions in the classroom. It seemed to the lead researcher that the pupils' awareness of audience could be developed by the teacher adopting the 'snowballing' technique advocated by Noel Entwistle for higher education; but now widely prevalent in the literature of education (e.g. Atkins et al 2002; Jones 2007; Wahyuni 2013). The classroom teacher was open and receptive (self-critical) in her/his thinking (subjective perspective) and commented that s/he had enjoyed the conversation and would use this technique with her/his pupils.

Drawing upon the work of the aforementioned Reason & Rowan (1981) the point is made by Dadds (2005: 32) that '...subjective research knowledge is enriched in validity when it is shared and critiqued with our research communities.' It is arguable that the classroom teacher and the lead researcher form the beginnings of a research community; and that they are sharing and critiquing the research knowledge of the pedagogic strategy of 'snowballing'. In so doing, the lead researcher is taking to heart the admonition of Dadds (2005: 31) that researchers

> ...must remember that we are... stepping into others' lives – and our actions must make sense to them. In our research ethics we need to move... into an empathetic perspective.

The researcher is drawing from a well of education knowledge that is different and deeper from the classroom teacher; and is trying to empathise with the teacher by thinking of what s/he would do in this situation. At its best, this might be a pursuit of the Aristotelian edict that:

> The person with understanding does not know and judge as one who stands apart and unaffected; but rather, as one united by a specific bond with the other, thinks with the other and undergoes the situation with the other (Bernstein 1983: 147).

At the very least, the researcher is trying to establish a degree of *credibility* with the teacher. Given the importance of teacher credibility with regard to influencing pupils' progress within the classroom[5]; then it is reasonable to assume that researcher credibility may also be an important factor regarding teacher progress.

Timeline

▶ In March 2015 the lead researcher accepted an invitation to attend a meeting of the ADASTRA Primary Partnership; and since that date has regularly attended meetings and become an active participant.

▶ In April 2015, following consultation with staff and school leaders at The Sir Donald Bailey Academy, the Head teacher produced a report 'The Speaking & Listening Functional Skills Curriculum'. This 24 page document identifies 4 strands to be addressed in particular i.e.

• Opportunities for Children to show an Awareness of their Audience;

• Opportunities for Children to Speak and Discuss;

• Opportunities for Children to Listen; and

• Opportunities for Children to Practise Non-Verbal Communication.

▶ Each of these strands is supported by 10-14 exemplars and school staff had discussed beforehand (January 2015) the '...activities and actions' (Hessey 2015: 2) that required to be undertaken.

▶ Following an initial meeting in September 2015 between the lead researcher and the Head teacher and perusal of school documentation; an outline was established for this research consultancy project.

▶ In October 2015 the lead researcher made a presentation to a full staff meeting during which the outline of professional conversations was established. Likewise, it was highlighted that this project was more concerned with consultancy and evidence-based teaching as envisaged by Hammersley-Fletcher et al (2015); and should not be perceived as a work of formal research.

▶ In January 2016 the co-researcher had a meeting with the Head teacher and the notes from this meeting helpfully establish the context of this project (please see below).

▶ In the same month the lead researcher conducted professional conversations with all teachers in Y1-Y4.

▶ The final set of professional conversations was completed with staff in Y5 and Y6 in late March 2016.

4 As quoted in Dadds (2005:32)

5 According to Hattie (2012) it is ranked 4= out of 150

Context

The school serves an area which has very high levels of unemployment. Having considered ways to reduce the effects of poverty, the school believes that the benefits gained by attempting to address parenting issues are questionable. Their approach is to educate the child in order to break the cycle of low aspirations leading to low attainment. They offer a wide range of events to engage the parents; events which the school views as "tokenistic" and finds the impact of these activities difficult to discern.

Instead the main thrust of their efforts is focussed on the pupils. The intention is to build character and make them competitively driven. They want the children to be winners, but also to know how to be good loser; and believe that their school values clearly express these goals. The school motto is *Labor Omnia Vincit* – work conquers everything. The long term objective is to produce children who can contribute positively to society and not to have low aspirations which prevent this from happening. They have a 'dreams' board where all the children have their dreams displayed and these are shared in assemblies.

Day and residential trips are heavily subsidised in order that no child misses out due to financial difficulties. The school receives around £300,000 per annum in Pupil Premium Grant; and this is directly spent on teaching staff in order to reduce class sizes and allow personalised learning. The Teaching Assistant workforce has also been greatly reduced by the current Head teacher in order to fund teaching staff. The provision of quality first teaching is seen as key to achieving the school's aims.

As a multi-academy trust the school is preparing to sponsor other schools. Initially at least, these are likely to be of a similar size and serving similarly disadvantaged areas. The school anticipates that The Sir Donald Bailey Academy systems and procedures will be rolled out across these schools very quickly. The ultimate aim is that children will benefit from an excellent education in schools which are at least 'Good' by Ofsted criteria. The senior leadership team (SLT) believes that they are becoming expert in poverty; and they are highly confident that their methods will be effective in other schools.

The Head teacher acknowledges that their approach may be viewed as unorthodox. The school was achieving 50% Level 4+ at the end of Key Stage 2 but is now over 90%. Their data for the next six years suggests that they will continue to be in the top 2% of schools nationally. The school believes that their drive to be a top achieving school benefits the children. They feel that the sense of wanting to prove themselves is evident in the pupils. This message of high achievement is consistently communicated to parents.

Parents are not only informed of pupil achievement, but also of the teaching profile so that they have confidence in the teaching staff. The latest inspection reported that '...teaching is consistently good [and] in some year groups it is outstanding' (Ofsted 2014: 1). The emphasis on high quality continuing professional development is clear as 25% of the teachers are currently undertaking a formal leadership qualification or a Master's degree. This further supports the unrelenting drive to ensure outstanding quality first teaching and effective succession planning.

Speaking & Listening – a progress check

The 1st half of the professional conversations with teaching staff focused primarily on the 4 strands outlined above (pp2-3). From the wealth of examples discussed; it became apparent that all of the staff had made provision for these strands within their pedagogic practices. The extent to which they had made provision varied, as might be expected; but it is fair to surmise that the large majority had made either ample or sufficient provision. In only a couple of cases did it appear that one or two strands had only been partially addressed; but the teachers were sufficiently aware that this required attention.

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The exemplar criteria below are ranked in the order in which they were evidenced throughout the professional conversations. Those criteria highlighted in *italics* were particularly evident; whilst those appearing below the broken ----- line were little in evidence and may require some attention (see Recommendations).

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Figure 1
Opportunities for Children to show an Awareness of their Audience
- *To correct children and have a consistent approach by all staff.*
- *Class assemblies where children formally present information to the school.*
- *Answering registers properly-'Good morning Miss…/Dinners please Miss…'*
- *Expectations of the children: how we speak and discipline them.*
- *House assemblies, where older children plan & deliver an assembly linked to themes of week.*

- Video blog on school website, making use of green screen technology.
- Children to meet and greet visitors and conduct school tours to potential parents.
- Children take on roles in class projects such as 'project lead'.
- Build in opportunities to speak to different audiences, making use of the community café.

- Role play opportunities in class. Give children character cards. For example, 'you are greeting a visitor to school, and your partner is the visitor. How would you greet them?'
- Children to answer class phones.
- Inviting children to SLT meetings[6].
- Children working in office and café; and
- Children recording a message on the school answer machine.

Notes:
One teacher 'bucked the trend' with regard to the lack of role play; and spoke convincingly of how 'high ability' pupils took on different roles within group work e.g. as leader, illustrator, summariser or questioner.

Another teacher emphasised the importance of having 'private conversations' with reluctant pupils in areas removed from the classroom – such as the corridor – whilst preparing for an assembly.

There was a request that visitors to the school are enabled to spend more time speaking with the children.

Assemblies were praised consistently.

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Figure 2
Opportunities for Children to Speak and Discuss
- *Superstar Assemblies where children discuss and talk about their dreams.*
- *Circle time and 'show n' tell' sessions.*
- *Hot seating as a teaching strategy in English.*
- *Class debates using house system, and use of talk partners in lessons.*

- Taking messages on behalf of the class teacher to other classes or departments.
- Children bring in newspapers -'what's been happening in the week?'[7]
- Talking Tables (EYFS).

- School Council.
- School radio/podcast to go on the website.
- Children applying to go into the year group above and new class.
- Partaking in the Woolfit Festival.
- Produce a sports report for all school team matches.

Notes:
Through problem solving such as 'Talk it Solve it' in Maths has yet to happen – but, recently, there has been a staff meeting about this.

There is a noticeable lack of unfamiliarity amongst teachers as to what strategies are employed by teachers in different parts of the school (see Recommendations below).

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6 This point not discussed with members of SLT
7 Alternatively, a Newsround approach was adopted

Figure 3
Opportunities for Children to Listen

• *Following instructions for 'what makes a good listener'. "Eyes looking and ears listening".*
• *Listening to audio stories.*
• *Watching videos in lessons.*
• *Working in pairs and responding to a partner.*
• *Taking messages on behalf of staff and following instructions.*

• Note taking and actively listening for key information.
• Having a 'look out' focus and selecting 3 things to spot.
• Visitors coming into school to speak.
• 'Every Lesson Counts' - demonstrating excellent behaviour for learning.

• Responding appropriately in terms of body language (Non-verbal communication).
• Flipped Learning - watching teacher videos outside of the school day.

Notes:
A particularly good example is that of *Tinga Tinga Tales* which are African fables from You Tube (approx. 5-10 minutes long). Children's ability to listen is 'tested' by teacher questioning afterwards and by them acting out the stories.

- Praise for *Let's Interact Training* that had been implemented several years ago; and repeated last year by a Speech & Language therapist.
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Figure 4
Opportunities for Children to Practise Non-Verbal Communication

• *Using drama and freeze frames in lessons.*
• *Children to create social stories and act them out. Pay particular attention to body language and facial expressions.*
• *Using signs and symbols in the classroom.*

• Training children for a range of contexts. For example, when showing visitors round school children should be taught to use a firm handshake (also when leaving lessons shake teacher's hand and make eye contact).
• Using Makaton where applicable.
• Showing appropriate emotions and being taught these. For example, what does it look like to be angry?
• Modelling scenarios. For example, 'Your dog has died. Is it appropriate to smile?'

• Using appropriate bodily contact.
• Showing awareness for spatial awareness.
• Demonstrating appropriate facial expressions.

Notes:
Again, good examples of *practice* highlighted by some teachers; of which other teachers in nearby year groups were unaware e.g. invitation to *Pajama Drama* specialist.

The bottom 3 criteria were seen as being problematic for some pupils e.g. inappropriate 'pulling faces' and 'rolling eyes' evidencing a lack of empathy.

Other points of particular significance were the value of events (e.g. Easter fayre); trips (e.g. Scarborough); and topics (e.g. Vikings) regarding the provision of opportunities to develop pupils' speaking & listening skills. The use and development of presentation skills was referred to often; but there was almost no recognition of the links that could be fashioned with Hattie's *Visible Learning*. Again, an indication that much good practice is taking place but that it is not fully connected with what is transpiring in the wider world of education. This leads to…

The 2nd half of the professional conversations with teaching staff focused on collaborating with fellow teachers across the school and with beginning to develop research skills. With respect to the former I discussed with several teachers the idea of collaboration in triads – with a colleague in the same year group and a colleague from elsewhere in the school who is able to lend a different perspective: this seemed to be well received. This can be developed by highlighting an earlier report for the ADASTRA Primary Partnership (Luby 2016a) that refers to the work of Stoll (2015). The points raised here are relevant not only for The Sir Donald Bailey Academy; but also for the ADASTRA Primary Partnership. If ADASTRA aims to become a 'self-improving school system' then it would benefit from heeding the advice offered by Stoll (2015) with respect to pedagogy,

professional development and leadership. Professor Stoll identifies '10 common messages' – all of which are worthy of reading – and 4 of which are highlighted below:

> ...the vital importance of... Providing sufficient time for deep quality talk between teachers benefits their professional relationships as well as leading to deep learning. Developing a consistent, shared language within and between schools and phases is important, not only in cementing relationships, but in supporting high standards.

> Collaborating with peers is also stimulating for teachers and helps them think more critically about their teaching...

> ...learning can be powerful when leaders take a non-judgmental approach to designing teacher-to-teacher development approaches and activity, such as... lesson study.

> ...teachers have to be given sufficient time to learn how to carry out collaborative enquiry effectively... This means that headteachers have to invest the necessary time, ensuring cover is available for teachers and middle leaders to design, participate in and evaluate projects, visit and get to know each other's schools, especially when supporting colleagues.
>
> (Stoll 2015: 18ff)

These 'common messages' underpin much of the recommendations to be found originally in Luby (2016b, c) and now outlined below.

Recommendations
1 & 2 for The Sir Donald Bailey Academy
3 & 4 for all schools within the ADASTRA Primary Partnership

1. All year groups to follow the practice of staff in Y4 and conduct an audit of current practices with respect to Speaking & Listening.
Audits should be conducted using following headings i.e.
1st column – 4 Standards:
- Opportunities for Children to Show an Awareness of their Audience;
- Opportunities for Children to Speak and Discuss;
- Opportunities for Children to Listen; and
- Opportunities for Children to Practise Non-Verbal Communication.

2nd column – Practice in the classroom and impact upon the children.
3rd column – Areas for future consideration.

2. All year groups to participate in Speaking & Listening lesson studies.
Members of staff are teamed up with those from a different year group e.g. Y1 + Y3 + Y5; Y2 + Y4 + Y6, etc.
- Each member of staff prepares a lesson that highlights 1 or more of the 4 strands. This lesson is discussed prior to implementation such that all team members come to a final agreement.
- Lesson is taught by one team member and the other two act as participant observers. Each participant observer has no more than 2 areas to observe.
- Feedback is shared after the lesson.
- Process is repeated with other two staff members.
- Each teacher prepares and teaches one lesson and acts as a participant observer for two lessons.

Senior Leadership Team to discuss audits and lesson studies with each year group.

3. Each school to establish a Book Review Club.
Each school to set aside time from staff meetings for a **Book Review Club** in which staff quite simply discuss and share their thoughts regarding a book review. There is **no** expectation that any work should arise from these readings. The book review could be handed out a week prior to a staff meeting with an expectation that teachers read it – and ½ an hour could be devoted to discussing and sharing. This should take place once a term. Three book reviews from the journal *Education Today* have already been sent to head teachers (see Luby 2016d).

4. Each school to participate in the Pilot Training Programme for RCTs.
The final recommendation is that each school within the ADASTRA Primary Partnership should participate in Bishop Grosseteste University's trialling of a Randomised Controlled Trials (RCT) training programme. Following on from the National College for Teaching and Leadership's (NCTL) *Closing the Gap: test and learn* research project, we are planning a training programme with help from schools within the KYRA Teaching School Alliance that were involved with the NCTL research project; and staff at BGU including a Visiting Tutor who is expert in psychology and statistics. This should enable staff from selected schools[8] to be trained such that *quasi-experiments and RCTs* can be undertaken within schools at a time of their choosing. This was an important finding of the research report with respect to closing the gap. At the time of writing 2 of the 6 ADASTRA schools had nominated a member of staff.

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8 Other schools involved are likely to be from Scunthorpe's Leading Learning Forward TSA, Humber TSA and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.

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RESEARCH CONSULTANCY REPORT -
FOREST VIEW

On behalf of ADASTRA Primary Partnership
For Forest View Junior School, Notts

DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING
Summary of Findings from Professional
Conversations with Staff & Y5/Y6 Pupils

Antony Luby
May 2016

POVERTY of ASPIRATION and LANGUAGE
– Developing Critical Thinking

...traditional methods of instruction do not provide the conditions necessary to encourage pupils to think critically, and that a major reason for this is inappropriate discourse structures in schools. It suggests that a focus on fostering critical thinking implies a type of classroom interaction that is very different from that most commonly practised. Dialogue within a community of enquiry setting is proposed. The arguments presented are related to young children in primary schools.

(Coles M J, 1995)

Introduction

So writes Martin Coles in the abstract for his paper 'Critical thinking talk and a community of enquiry in the primary school' published in the academic journal *Language and Education*. This dissatisfaction with the "type of talk" prevailing in primary classrooms is one of the drivers for school staff implementing School Improvement Plan – Teaching and Learning Priority 3 i.e. 'To develop pupils' independence by providing further opportunities for the development of thinking skills...'

First of all, it must be recognised that Critical Thinking Skills is a contested area that has been subject to much theorising and practice in the last twenty years; indeed Mulnix (2012) even suggests that '...there is widespread disagreement over what critical thinking actually is.' In the same year of Coles' article an influential book was written by Neil Mercer - 'a psychologist with a special interest in the role of language in the classroom and the development of children's thinking, (and who) regularly contributes to professional development activities for local authorities and schools' (http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/people/staff/mercer/) In his book *The Guided Construction of Knowledge*, Neil Mercer supports the proposal of Coles (1995) for "dialogue within a community of enquiry" – and he identifies two "types of talk" that are of particular interest in supporting such a dialogic community: and to this we shall return later.

Context

Following a preliminary visit to Forest View Junior School in December 2015, it was ascertained that although critical thinking is not part of the formal curriculum; it is currently being highlighted in a similar way to Enterprise activities held at the beginning of the academic session. It feeds into the informal curriculum through the "high-adrenaline" activities in which Y6 pupils participate during their residential week at Kingswood Activity Centre near Huddersfield e.g. problem solving, negotiation, risk taking, etc. This helps to develop confidence which is seen as pivotal to underpinning the development of critical thinking. Within the school therefore, there is a holistic approach to critical thinking; and this is similar to the view of Dando (2016) that '...developing critical-thinking skills... (has) the ultimate goal to prepare students for a lifetime of learning.'

Of course, Forest View staff are aware of this aim; and teachers '...have always been aware of taking opportunities to make children think' [interview; October 2015]. For example, there used to be a Thinking Skill activity in the morning – now subsumed within open-ended and investigative approach to Morning Maths. However, having been made more explicit within the 2015-16 School Improvement Plan (SIP) there is an increased emphasis on critical thinking that is even apparent within the school decor e.g. "I Am a Year 6/5 Thinker" posters are displayed on classroom walls and, in one instance, are pasted on shared classroom desks.

An in-service session in October 2015 signalled the beginning of awareness-raising amongst the staff; and members of staff have evaluated the contribution of critical thinking from a cross-curricular perspective. This has translated into practical activities such as:
- a 15 minute Morning Maths session in which at least 1 question aims to develop critical thinking e.g. children to state and justify which is the odd-one-out from a selection of 3 (say circle, triangle, square);
- children select and justify a choice of statement from "Always – Sometimes – Never";
- Y5 children self-assessing with regard to Thinking Skills in the back of their books.

Having identified some of the context within the school the next step was to determine research methodology for the visit in May 2016.

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Methodology

> '...first, teachers must inevitably be intimately involved in the research process; and second, researchers must justify themselves to practitioners, not practitioners to researchers' (Stenhouse 1980: 14)

This quote is intended for *all* colleagues within the ADASTRA Primary Partnership. Lawrence Stenhouse is widely regarded as the founder of classroom-based action research within the United Kingdom. When research takes place within schools it is the "outsider" – the researcher – who has to conform to the expectations and requirements of the "insiders" within the school. The "insiders" set the parameters as to what may or may not be helpful in their classroom practices. Classroom teachers do not have to adjust their practices in order to suit the demands of research – but, rather, the researchers must adjust their practices to suit the requirements of teachers.

If the priority of the relationship between researcher and teacher is to gain knowledge of classroom practices that are likely to be generalizable to a wider audience; then the focus is likely to be on the "purity" of research with regard to validity, reliability, etc. However, Stenhouse contends that the priority of the relationship between teacher and researcher should be the needs of the teachers – and, this being the case, then it is "practicality" of the research that is of greater importance i.e. how helpful is this research to classroom practices?

Understanding of classroom practices is usually expressed in tacit or experiential terms. For instance, a P4 teacher may discuss a pupil's performance with the P3 teacher who taught her/him just a few months ago. Their conversation will be based on tacit, experiential knowledge derived from months of informal observations of behaviour, attitude etc. As Sharples (2013) explains: 'It is important to remember that there is a huge amount of experiential knowledge that is not captured by research...'

However, if this experiential knowledge is to be made more widely available then it needs to be developed and refined. Addressing a World Association of Lesson Studies conference, one 'great' in the world of action research, John Elliott (2009) points out – in reference to another 'great,' Lawrence Stenhouse, that:

> ...in order for teachers to capture and express their emerging insights to each other, they needed to develop a common vocabulary of concepts and a syntax of theory. Such a theoretical framework of concepts should be testable by teachers and open to the development of new concepts and theory.

This would indicate that it is advisable for teachers to not only discuss with each other but to include researchers in their conversations; as generally speaking, researchers can assist teachers with theorising and conceptualising their language and practices. For example, two teachers may be discussing the perceived benefits of an enterprise mini-company within the school - increased motivation, numeracy skills, etc. The researcher may point to literature about enterprising learning and teaching that integrates this mini-company approach within classroom practices. In so doing, both teachers and researcher are engaging in dialogue within a community of enquiry. According to Elliott (2009) this represents a development from tacit beliefs about how to teach into a basis for creating pedagogical knowledge. This basis for pedagogical knowledge is further strengthened if teachers and researcher agree a method(s) by which to systematically gather further evidence that informs their conversation.

With respect to Forest View Junior School the teachers and researcher agreed the following methodology for systematically gathering further evidence:

(1) Analysis of school documentation especially School Improvement Plan and Notes from Inset Day 23 October 2015;

(2) Focus group interview of 12 pupils in Y5 & Y6 who demonstrate a broad representation of pupil abilities; and

(3) Two sets of professional conversations with 4 teachers
in Y5 & Y6.

Perusal of school documentation is in order to set context and background for this *Developing Critical Thinking* initiative. The focus group interview is to ascertain what pupils think and feel about this initiative and, to some extent, determine the impact of this initiative within the school. The 1st set of professional conversations is to enable staff to reflect upon previous practices and to look ahead to new challenges. The 2nd set of professional conversations is to reflect back upon the implementation this initiative and to consider ways ahead.

Findings

Even a cursory examination of the **school documentation** reveals that this is a well-planned initiative. The Notes from the Inset Day, 23rd October 2015, indicate that the school staff has a firm understanding of the overall ADASTRA initiative to address the 5 areas of poverty i.e.

- Material
- Emotional
- Language
- Experience
- Aspiration

They have identified 43 criteria spread quite evenly across these 5 areas that impinge directly upon school life at Forest View – with a sub-total of 17 criteria for the foci of "Language" and "Aspiration" e.g. "inappropriate talk" for the former and "lack of positive role models" for the latter. Moreover, in a positive fashion, they have identified 36 actions that the school undertakes to counteract these 5 areas of poverty – with 15 addressing the foci of "Language" and "Aspiration" e.g. "talk partners/modelling" for the former and "Enterprise week" for the latter.

With regard to the 2015-16 SIP Teaching & Learning Priority 3 i.e. "To develop pupils' independence by providing further opportunities for the development of thinking skills..." – there is a substantial 15-page document that outlines:

- Context
- Current position
- Intentions
- Key Objectives
- Success milestones
- Working plan
- Evaluation
- Evidence
- Future actions

This is a commendable and comprehensive document that demonstrates, in detail, the school's understanding and actions with regard to this *Developing Critical Thinking* initiative. The school intends to build on the development of Critical Thinking as part of the 2016-17 SIP by focussing on developing staff's knowledge and understanding of teaching the curriculum in greater depth; and through the provision of more opportunities for children to apply their understanding. (Worthington 2016)

The focus group interview was preceded, by chance, with an interview with 2 pupils from Y6. These pupils spoke fluently about their experience of "Critical Thinking in Maths." In particular, they explained the *Rucsac* activity i.e.

- Read
- Underline
- Clues
- Solve
- Answer
- Check

and also the *POG* activity i.e.

- Peculiar
- Obvious
- General

They were able to demonstrate their understanding through examples relating to measurements and weights. They agreed that '...this is different from General Maths' and that 'Critical Maths is helping us to think things through better.' Although they enjoy Critical Maths they are not sufficiently adept at explaining what 'Critical' means. Nonetheless, this pair are clearly benefitting from and developing through these activities. The ease and fluency with which they spoke was a precursor for the focus group interview with 12 pupils.

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The 12 children from Y5 and Y6, of diverse abilities, needed little prompting to provide verbal or visual examples of the activities they undertake with respect to Critical Thinking. The children are quite clear that there are 8 sets activities related to this area i.e.

- *Seeking and Keeping Ideas*
  - Demonstrated through their ability to identify and locate information in their folders pursuant of our discussion.
- *Thinking Critically*
  - 'In Enterprise week we had to think of earning money at Tesco and deciding the best time to go and how many customers' + 'Maun Infants school and how many parents there are.'
- *Working with others*
  - 'Talk partners in Maths and English with Y6 and Y3 having a chance to share ideas and this helps both of you.'
- *Using Reflection and Feedback*
  - 'Blue pen work which is from the teacher' and 'reflection box that is for Maths mostly' and this needs to be done 'sensitive[ly] for example writing that this work needs a bit more description.'
- *Problem solving*
  - Several examples given but the most striking and the most animated conversation arose from their discussion of their experience at the Dukeries Academy – in particular, Science experiments about electricity and using a computer to send designs to a laser cutter.
- *Flexing the Imagination*
  - Highlighted the use of figurative language e.g. scary story in which an exemplar story 'helps all of the class to stay on track.' The detailed set of marking objectives for checking after story writing is generally seen as helpful.
- *Building Models and Theories*
  - Interesting discussion about 'dropping a book' and the theory of gravity indicates pupils' awareness.
- *Future thinking*
  - Examples cited include:
    - Reflections that you correct for the future
    - Preparations for Kingswood
    - Preparing for SATS through use of "SATS buster."

It is clear, from this sample of pupils in Y5 and Y6, that the materials written on walls and desks for this *Developing Critical Thinking* initiative are embedding themselves within the consciousness of the pupils. The children themselves were a joy to talk with and a real credit to the school.

From the **two sets of professional conversations** with staff it is noteworthy that the school's system of new curricular developments being introduced by a member of staff, who is perceived to be an authority in that area; is a sound one. When this new development is introduced with practical strategies already in place (as per School Improvement Plan); and the "author" has previous experience (in this case with a MaST course); then staff adopt a professional approach towards its implementation. The staff take a holistic view of the children whom they teach i.e. 'not just a SATS child.' And this holistic view underpins their aspirations towards child development for later life.

Members of staff are self-aware and highlight minor criticisms such as missed opportunities regarding cross-curricular development; and that an earlier implementation of this initiative would allow for better planning. But the main thrust of staff concerns is that pupils develop independence; such as an example cited whereby a pupil struggled with a symmetry task but displayed the resilience 'to just get on with it using scissors.' The staff indicated their belief that these 'independent and critical' strategies as outlined in the "I Am A Year 5/6 Thinker" are becoming embedded within classroom practices. Moreover, the school has sourced classroom resources to further encourage independence e.g. Numicon, 100 beads, Fraction Bars in Maths, etc.

Notably, a particular interest was expressed with regard to developing oracy – that is an area of national need as '...England has nothing like the tradition of oral pedagogy which is fundamental to public education in many continental European countries' (Alexander 2008: 95). So, whilst staff made telling points about a more strategic introduction of spelling strategies, and putting in more Maths resources to classrooms; it is the overall vision of critical thinking addressing poverty of language and aspiration that strikes the deepest chord.

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Recommendations

Critical thinking as expressed through language is found in the work of the aforementioned Neil Mercer: most notably in the two "types of talk" referred to as "cumulative talk" and "exploratory talk". With *cumulative talk* pupils '...build positively but uncritically on what the other has said'; and for *exploratory talk* they '...engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas.' (Mercer 1995: 104) With regard to addressing poverty in areas of high need; the efficacy of one of these two types of talk has recently been demonstrated by Haynes (2015).

As referred to in an earlier consultancy report for the ADASTRA Primary Partnership (Jacksdale Nursery and Primary School; January 2016) Haynes (2015: 10) contends that '...that this type of pedagogical approach (exploratory talk) could be crucial in enabling... disadvantaged students to have a space for their voices to be heard and valued, an experience that could go far beyond the classroom and into the realities of the students' social world.' Further, it is important to note that Haynes (2015: 11) informs us that her research was undertaken in a school that '...draws most of its students from the local residential estate, which is an area of extreme social and economic deprivation: NEET figures are almost three times the city average, almost 90% of the students are of White British heritage, and the number of students receiving free school meals is well above the national average.' This resonates with the common ADASTRA bond of working with "White British children in areas of deprivation and underachievement."

Although Haynes' research was conducted with older, Y9 pupils; there is good reason to believe that exploratory talk is suitable for children in primary schools. Indeed, the eighth and final aim of the renowned *Cambridge Primary Review Trust* (CPRT) is 'To advance a pedagogy in which dialogue is central...' (see http://cprtrust.org.uk/about_cprt/aims/). My colleague at Bishop Grosseteste University, Adam Hounslow-Eyre, is the CPRT regional coordinator for the East Midlands; and so my **1st recommendation** is that the ADASTRA Primary Partnership make contact with Adam[1] and initiate a discussion as to how, with respect to further embedding dialogue in classrooms, both CPRT and ADASTRA can work together.

Given that Forest View already has in place "talk partners" for Y6 and Y3, then my **2nd recommendation** is that, on behalf of the ADASTRA Primary Partnership; Forest View considers piloting a Y6 research project to implement the two types of talk mentioned above i.e. *cumulative talk* and *exploratory talk*. In order to illustrate these types of talk, I have outlined below two examples from my research into the subject of religious education in secondary schools. Although not directly comparable with upper stages of primary schooling they will, hopefully, paint a clearer picture of both of these types of talk. Also, it is intended to demonstrate how cumulative talk is a necessary precursor for exploratory talk. In appendix 1 example, cumulative talk is demonstrated by the respondent, Jamie, offering confirmation of initiator Robbie's belief in God-guided

evolution. And there is both repetition and confirmation with regard to a literal understanding of the Adam and Eve story. Indeed, some elaboration is offered by Jamie with the introduction of symbolism, which, in turn, is confirmed by Robbie. Given the joint themes of poverty of language and aspiration the school will need to decide whether and how this type of language can be inculcated within the classroom practices of Y6.
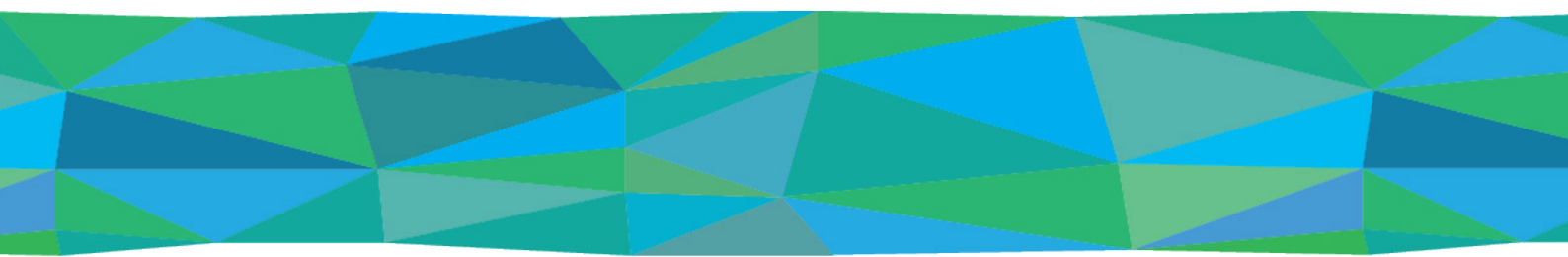
A further example of exploratory talk is given in appendix 2. Mercer (1995: 104) contends that such talk is characterized by 'statements and suggestions [being] offered for joint consideration...' In this case it is belief in the resurrection. Such statements and suggestions '... may be challenged and counter-challenged...' which it clearly is by both Elsie (challenge) and Kathy (counter-challenge). Notably, '... challenges are justified and alternative hypotheses are offered.' With this example, Elsie's challenge is justified by poorer medical procedures and knowledge of the time; and an alternative hypothesis of coma is offered. Again, there needs to be a discussion between practitioners and researchers as to how this might best, if at all, be translated into Y6 classroom practices.

The final and **3rd recommendation** is that given this concern with pedagogy the ADASTRA Primary Partnership should give consideration to making a special study of Alex Moore's (2012) *Teaching and Learning: Pedagogy, Curriculum and Culture.* The reasoning behind this is twofold. Firstly, Forest View is aiming to develop a curriculum that better prepares children for the 'real world.' In the 1990s there were many curricular initiatives such as enterprise learning, flexible learning, negotiating the curriculum, etc. that aimed to do likewise. And, as Moore (2012: 170) points: '...curriculum arguments... that were being engaged with nearly thirty-five years ago are still so relevant today.' I find this to be true in many of the professional conversations with teachers in ADASTRA schools. Secondly, much of the research consultancy for ADASTRA schools has been about evidence-gathering and 'dipping toes into the water' of action research. In terms of developing a vision for furthering the relationship between practice and research Moore (2012: 136) paints an inviting picture:

> Teachers should perceive themselves as *researchers* and *theorists* as well as practitioners. *Action research* (original emphasis) is a particularly valuable way for teachers to evaluate and critique their own current practice and to move in an informed and principled way towards more effective future practice.

Each school has a copy of a review of this book for staff to share and discuss at a staff meeting. Given the participation of two of the Partnership's six head teachers at the BGU June conference, and the invitation to co-present at an academic conference in Leeds in September 2016; then it may be timely for head teachers and staff to develop a strategic understanding of pedagogy and what this might entail. This should be discussed at a future meeting of the ADASTRA Primary Partnership.

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1 Adam is one of the BGU ethnographic researchers and will be attending forthcoming conference, 21st June, *Evidence-based approaches to Closing the Gap.* Also, David Reedy, CPRT Co-Director will be giving the first keynote address 'Talk at the heart of an effective pedagogy.'

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Appendix 1

…identify conversation that can be construed as 'cumulative talk' whereby pupils 'build positively but uncritically on what the other has said'. According to Mercer (1995, 104) such discourse is '… characterized by repetitions, confirmations and elaborations' – for example:

Robbie: Definitely! Do you … would you agree with me that … I don't feel like … I do believe in evolution as well as God like creating animals but I do believe they also evolved into what we have today. Would you agree with that?

Jamie: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Totally agree! That's pretty sound.

Robbie: Cool! Pretty sound indeed. Um … yeah … I also think stuff that's read in the Bible is not fully meant to be taken entirely literally like the story of Adam and Eve and stuff.

Jamie: Yeah I think some people take that too literally and people are up in arms about evolution and Adam and Eve and how it's all wrong but I think it's more symbolic than it is literal.

Robbie: Definitely! Yeah that's what it is …

(source: Luby 2014: 62-63)

Appendix 2

Kathy: Do you believe in the resurrection?

Elsie: I do but it seems more likely that he just had a coma.

Kathy: It's the keystone of Christian faith if you don't believe in Easter.

Elsie: I know it is but I do kind of believe in it but it is more likely to be some sleeping drug or a coma or something more.

Kathy: I have never heard that one before.

Elsie: He died then a few days later he rose again.

Kathy: Yes he died, they had checks.

Elsie: I know but medical things weren't that good then.

Kathy: You can kind of tell if someone is breathing or not.

Elsie: Do you have proof of that?

(source: Luby 2013)

Adastra Index
collated by Wendy Morton

Ramsden Primary School, Carlton in Lindrick

Ramsden Primary School is situated in Carlton in Lindrick near Worksop within the Bassetlaw district of Nottinghamshire. Whilst the school itself lies in a post code area classified as the 40% least deprived areas of the country, a façade of affluence hides a startling truth. A culmination of the area's history and industrial growth mean that the children suffer some of the worst deprivation in the country. Of 183 children (107 boys and 76 girls) who come to the school, over 80% come from the Bassetlaw area of 004A. This area is counted as being in the top 10% most deprived areas relating to childhood poverty, education, health and crime.
The school community is predominantly White British (99%) and over 58% male. The term 'white working class boys certainly applies.
Within the local area Ramsden is seen by many as the 'posh school.' The problem with this is that the quite low (certainly for the area) statistics of 12% of pupils being eligible for free school meals and 23.5% are Ever 6, may back up studies showing that families from lower income backgrounds have no less ambition for their children, but are more reluctant to apply for free school meals.
The school has recently received a 'good' Ofsted rating and has worked with the local authority in the past and continues to offer support to other schools. We are also working closely with the Adastra Primary Partnership and the Together for Worksop initiative to ensure that we give our children the best education they can possibly receive.

The indices of deprivation map shows that out of 32,844 Bassetlaw 004A ranks:
Income deprivation domain 642 - 10% most deprived
Employment deprivation domain 1015 – 10% most deprived
Education, skills and training domain 150 – 10% most deprived
Health, deprivation and disability domain 1393 – 10% most deprived
Crime domain 2130 – 10% most deprived
IDACI 148 – 10% most deprived

Ramsden Primary School has 12% of pupils on FSM and 23.5% who are 'Ever 6'

Forest View Junior School, Ollerton

Forest View Junior School is a smaller than average Junior School situated in Ollerton within the Newark and Sherwood District of Nottinghamshire. There are currently 195 pupils on roll (86 boys and 109 girls) – the school has significantly increased over the last three years with 53 new pupils joining the school. Ollerton is in the top 30% of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country and the top 20% for Employment and Health Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivation). The school community is predominantly White British (98%). 17% of our children are on the SEN register and currently 22% of our children are eligible for Free School Meals (43% Ever 6 pupils).

At the last inspection, Forest View was deemed as a good school (Ofsted December 2011) and continues to build on its strengths. The school is currently working in collaboration with the local authority offering support to other schools within Nottinghamshire. Forest View is also working successfully with the Adastra Partnership, the Together for Newark Network and the Sherwood Forest Education Partnership to ensure children continue to achieve consistently well.

Abbey Hill Primary School, Kirkby in Ashfield

Currently have 275 pupils from 2 to 11 on roll. Employment, Education and health – in the 20% most deprived but are slightly better for access to housing etc so I guess it averages out to 30%
No of pupils – 80 full time and 54 part time 26% of pupils
No of FSM/PP – 21 full time and 14 pt   26% of pupils
 Index of Multiple Deprivation is 6,932 (30% most deprived in the country) - interestingly for Income, EOur PP ever6 in our last Raiseonline was 65.9% and our school deprivation index 0.47. On the links Tony sent us our index of multiple deprivation is 1210 out of 32,844 areas and the IDACI is 708 out of 32,844. This puts us in the top 10% of most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.

Abbey Hill Primary and Nursery School serves an area of very high social and economic disadvantage, and the vast majority of pupils come from within the catchment area. The school's IDACI score indicates that 47% of pupils are living in families that are income deprived. Other indices of deprivation show that education, skills and training are significantly low in the local area ranking144 out of 32,844 neighbourhoods.

A significant number of children and families are supported by social services and other agencies and the school employs a full time Child and Family Support Worker who works very effectively with the most vulnerable families. The school achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award in 2014, significantly improving levels of parental engagement with the school and parents' involvement in a range of school activities. The school receives substantial pupil premium funding and has specific and effective programmes for using this to improve outcomes for its most disadvantaged pupils.
In April 2015 the school opened its provision for two year olds. This provision aims to improve the attainment and life chances of the most disadvantaged children in the community, through the early development of social, physical and communication & language skills. The school has built strong links with staff from the local Children's Centre and community health workers to ensure the new provision meets the needs of its youngest children and newest parents.

Hallcroft Infants School, Retford

Hallcroft Infant & Nursery School is in Retford, a small market town in Nottinghamshire. It is a smaller-than-average infant school. It shares the same site as a Children's Centre. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and a small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium varies between cohorts but is on average 25%. (FSM pupils is currently an average of 15% per year group)

The school works closely with the community, particularly our Governors, and these people help support learning within school and special events. Breakfast club, lunch club and afterschool sports club, cookery club, maths club etc are offered to all pupils and are popular with parents.

Jacksdale Primary and Nursery School, Jacksdale

No of pupils; 250
FSM/Ever 6: 25%
Deprivation Indicator – The school is sited within the top 50% most deprived areas and has a number of children on roll from Amber Valley which is in the top 10% most deprived areas.
Jacksdale School is situated in the heart of Jacksdale village, very close to the Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire border. Housing consists of a mixture of privately owned and council properties. 25% of children are entitled to pupil premium funding. The school was judged as a "Good" school following its recent Ofsted inspection in February 2015.
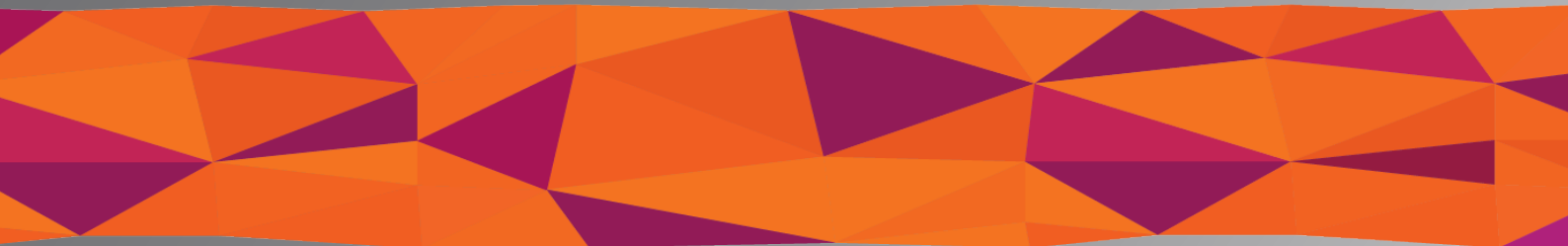
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