



CASTILION PRIMARY SCHOOL

Engage, Enthuse, Empower



CLOSING THE GAP: CHANGING THE MINDSET



Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Albert Einstein

You will not be surprised to read that at Castilion we are fully committed to all pupils reaching their potential in all aspects of their development. All schools will say the same.

If you think you can do a thing or think you can't do a thing, you're right.

Henry Ford



However, our starting point is that we not make any distinctions between children with regards to whether they fall into any externally defined category, e.g., eligible for pupil premium funding (PP). This has implications as to how we approach Closing the Gap. This article will focus on Closing the gap with PP children.

Everybody has goals, aspirations or whatever, and everybody has been at a point in their life where nobody believed in them.

Eminem

This is important to us as a school as we believe that thinking of children as belonging to a potentially underperforming 'category' can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy of expected underachievement.

Whatever we expect with confidence becomes our own self-fulfilling prophecy.

Brian Tracey

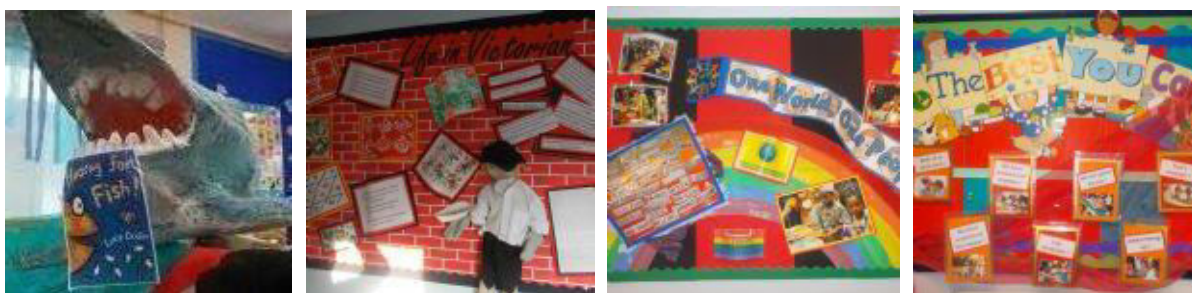
The school's culture and commitment to excellence determines the prophecy that we seek to fulfil.



Failure is not an option. Everyone has to succeed.

Arnold Schwarzenegger

We prioritise the development of children's self-belief, confidence and aspiration in order to break the cycle of disadvantage and underachievement that in turn creates the Gap. We believe that all children should be given the tools to create their own futures.



It is our capacity to mould ourselves that counts. Those that can't change their mind can't change anything.

Rollo May

Our approach to Closing the Gap is research based and underpinned by the development of children's self-belief, confidence and aspiration. We adopt a holistic and joined-up approach that deals with the range of obstacles and negative influences that can potentially disadvantage children. PP funding enables us to carry out and maintain these initiatives.

Quality first teaching

Quality first teaching is the most effective tool in addressing this issue. We focus on the following:

- Explicit, direct teaching providing feedback to learners.
- Collaborative and co-operative approaches.
- Peer-tutoring.
- Meta-cognitive approaches (planning, monitoring and reviewing one's own learning).
- One-to-one and small group intervention and tutoring.
- Focussed planning and assessment for targeted children.

Development of children's self-belief, confidence and aspiration

We use a range of strategies to support children in developing these areas:

- Culture of excellence insisted upon.
- Behaviour for learning policies firmly linked to celebrating appropriate social and academic attitudes.
- Effective pastoral systems and mentoring.
- Children's leadership: leadership team, playground buddies, playground leaders, games trainers and junior road safety officers.
- Visits of motivational role models.
- Celebrating success in a range of meaningful ways.
- Children's involvement in decision making.

Engaging parents and carers

Engaging parents and carers in their children's education is vital in helping children achieve at school and improve emotional well-being. These approaches benefit both the most vulnerable and the most able:

- Family liaison officer.
- Teaching Assistants: focus on PP pupils.
- Learning Mentor role focused on PP pupils.
- Booster groups and learning clubs.
- Trip subsidies/school journey subsidies.
- Targeted curriculum resources.
- Proposed breakfast club targeted at PP pupils.

Most approaches work for the majority of learners. Therefore, most approaches will maintain the gap!

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'Advantage begets further advantage' or 'To them that hath shall more be given'.

The Matthew Effect

We are proud that our PP children score higher than PP children and in many cases higher than non-PP children nationally in both the end of KS1 and 2 assessments. The gap between the achievement of our PP children and both school and national non-PP children has closed in most areas or is closing rapidly.

However, our key indicator of success is the increased self-belief that children take into the next stage of their school careers. We then know that we have played a role in ensuring that the Gap remains firmly closed.



Weighing the pig doesn't fatten it.

Baby Pig