

How do interventions work in practice?

An example

Calderdale Equity Research Network (CERN)

Context

CERN was initiated by head teachers from 4 high schools in Calderdale.

These schools serve many vulnerable children in Calderdale – a situation that has been reinforced by a mixed economy of selective, faith and comprehensive schools at secondary level.

CERN is especially important in helping to develop area-level responses to the inequities this causes, as well as helping each school respond to the needs of their learners.

Challenges identified in the 4 schools

The CERN schools share a commitment to making every child matter. In each school this lead to a focus on a different theme around a group of vulnerable learners.

- **Mobility** In school A, a significant number of pupils join the school during Key Stage 4.
- **Attendance** In school B, attendance is 82%, indicating a large number of pupils who choose not to participate in learning opportunities available to them.
- **Underachievement** In school C, some learners underachieve, see themselves as educational failures, and many drop out of post-16 education.
- **Invisibility** In school D, a significant number of pupils have been identified as going unnoticed because they are neither outstanding nor challenging learners.



Aims

To help 4 schools develop collectively a greater capacity for responding to the needs of learners who lose out within and across their schools.

Development and research questions

1. Is education equal for all students? Who loses out?
2. How does existing practice and policy respond to the needs of these students who lose out?
3. What do these learners think and feel about their experiences of learning?
4. What do parents, teachers, and other stakeholders think about these experiences of learning?
5. Building on this evidence gathered, what whole and across school strategies can be implemented that lead staff to respond more effectively and to the diverse needs of learners?
6. What impacts do these strategies have – both on the target group of learners and on the whole school?
7. How can the schools work together to share their strategies and experiences so that the community of schools benefits from this collaboration.

Methods used

- Research teams of staff members set up in each school.
- Research teams working closely with the Centre to investigate the experiences of pupils who lose out.
- Within and across school meetings to share research projects.
- Within and across school evidence gathering, sharing and critical support and discussion.
- Evidence gathering through analysing statistics, observations, pupil discussion forums, parent, teacher and pupil interviews, participatory photography.
- Challenging and developing practice through report writing and dissemination at whole school staff meetings.
- Cross school celebration event for the wider community.