

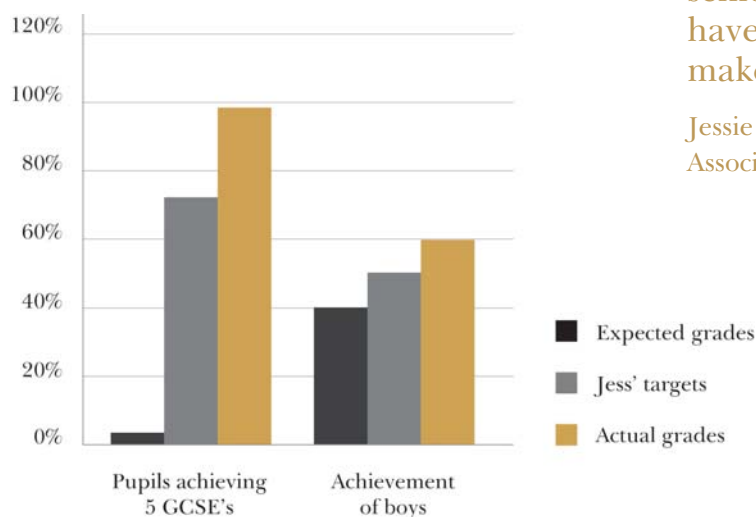
PARTICIPANT CASE STUDY A VITAL IMPACT

Future Leader Jessie Kaur undertook a residency year at Park High School in Harrow, working with headteacher Tony Barnes. Following that, she continued at the school for a further year as Associate Deputy Headteacher. During her time at the school she became involved in raising the attainment of the 20 per cent of students who were traditionally underachieving, and achieved an unprecedented 90 per cent Grade B result in literacy and numeracy for a further 40 underachieving students, enabling all of them to gain college places. Added to this, she improved and developed the way subject departments are reviewed, successfully bid for a £30,000 grant for an extended school science initiative which she is now project managing, helped change teacher attitudes towards the lowest achieving pupils, delivered CPD to enable teachers to deliver consistently outstanding lessons, wrote numerous governors reports and project managed several outreach programmes.



“I got involved with Future Leaders because of their mission statement. I absolutely believe that every child matters, and that every child can succeed. And it's vital that the senior leadership team believe this too. This course meant that I could fast track to senior leadership and ultimately have my own school and really make a difference to kids lives.”

Jessie Kaur, Future Leader 2007/2008,
Associate Deputy Head, Park High School



It is clear that the impact Jessie Kaur has had at Park High School has been substantial, and long lasting. After completing her first year at the school, headteacher Tony Barnes was keen that Jessie stayed on for a further year: “I felt that everything she had to offer the school, and that we had to offer her, couldn't be completed in a year,” explains Tony. “She had already achieved so much, and I wanted her to be able to stay on and develop some of her outstanding practices school wide, and follow through a number of the initiatives she had implemented.

“The school is on a path from good to outstanding and I wanted to pick up some of the momentum that goes with having a Future Leader in the school - someone who is at the cutting edge of thinking, and is keen to develop and change quickly.”

Perhaps one of Jessie's key achievements has been her commitment to raising attainment for disadvantaged and underachieving pupils. Both of the projects she undertook in her residency year, as well as numerous outreach initiatives, were focused towards ensuring that these young people were given the best chance to succeed that they could.



A second chance

A specific 20 per cent of Yr 11 pupils - around 40 students - were underachieving and the school wanted to ensure that their GCSE results presented them with an opportunity to attend college. “They were currently D and E students,” says Jessie. “And it was my role to try and get them up to achieving more so they had a chance to get the most out of their education.”

Jessie worked with the head of Yr 11 and established that by bringing in a literacy and numeracy qualification and dropping the ICT GCSE, these underachieving students would gain extra qualifications and get help with core subjects such as English and Maths. “The kids were disaffected, and we wanted to create a program that made them feel worthwhile - something that would help them in the wider world. The ICT had no equity for them as they weren't going to achieve high grades, and we felt they would get more value from a B in functional skills than an E in ICT. So they did the five GCSEs and the literacy and numeracy qualification in addition.”

The key focus for Jessie was the standards of teaching that these pupils received, and she was very clear about devising lessons which would support the pupils and help them progress. “I really believe that for a child to be the best they can be, they need to have outstanding lessons, and nothing less. Kids also need short targets and a way to measure what they've learnt at the end of the lesson, so we devised a point schemes which helped them track their own attainment.”

“The effect was quite extraordinary; not only did results improve, but also motivation, behaviour and attendance.”

It was also vital to ensure that pupils felt



valued and encouraged. Efforts were made to 'market' the scheme as a bespoke lesson programme for a select group of pupils, and Jessie also put in place a number of measures designed to motivate and inspire the pupils, including inviting a psychologist and an eight year old Gifted and Talented child to visit the group. "The Gifted and Talented child encouraged the pupils to see success and achievement as something positive, and encouraged them to recognise the value in education," she explains. "Overall the functional skills classes had a completely holistic effect. The students' motivation and confidence changed, behaviour and attendance improved, they started to say they felt part of a community, and that they felt safe and supported. A number of them said they wished this happened in all their classes."

And the results, in Jessie's words, speak for themselves. Her target was 70 per cent, but she actually achieved an impressive 90 per cent of students who got a grade B in literacy and numeracy, in addition to the other five GCSEs that they achieved. Eight students were also entered for the higher paper, and 75 per cent of the pupils that attained Bs were traditionally underachieving black and Indian boys, several of whom have subsequently been accepted into sixth form college.

"It was fantastic to have such a direct impact so quickly. It was challenging, and there was a lot of planning involved, but it's so rewarding looking at the outcomes and what you've achieved. For some of my pupils it was their highest grade - and their results brought the school's entire point score up."

The success of the programme now means that it can be rolled out to a wider group of pupils, and Jessie's lesson plans can be adapted easily by the staff. Four other teachers - including the head of year 11 and

the head of learning development - are delivering the programme this year to 40 per cent of the pupils in year 11, and there are plans to deliver it in year 10 as well.



Narrowing the gap

Working with teachers is clearly one of Jessie's strengths, and something she harnessed for her second project. Wanting to raise the achievement of boys, Jessie decided to get a fresh perspective and worked with NQTs to devise an improvement programme.

"Boys underperform here on a 60/40 ratio. I ran a range of sessions with new teachers looking at how to raise achievement. They had to research techniques, come up with a specialised scheme of work that was tapping into what the boys needed, plan and deliver lessons and then measure their success. The difference we made, which was close to improving the boys' attainment by 20 per cent, was excellent and every single NQT couldn't believe the impact that they'd had."

The project also had further implications on a school-wide level. "It really empowered the NQTs to feel that their contribution was valuable, and the more experienced teachers were given a new way of working



which they found refreshing and inspiring,” explains Jessie.

An enthusiastic approach

Working with teaching attitudes and improving standards was another area in which Jessie excelled. Tony Barnes explains that Jessie's enthusiasm and rigorous standards of teaching have set the bar high.

“Having her enthusiasm here was important in itself, but she also demonstrated outstanding teaching in a number of ways and now has teachers going to her for support and advice on how to improve their teaching.

“Her work with the underachieving pupils in the school has also been exemplary and she has had a major impact on both the provision for and the perception of underachieving pupils. It wasn't just about course content but it was about teacher's perceptions of what our lowest achieving kids can do. A large number of our kids would have left without having the necessary results to get them onto the next stage of their education, and Jessie has enabled that group to have a much better progression.”

“It was fantastic to have such a direct impact so quickly.”

Tony identifies another area where Jessie's commitment to standards has made a noticeable difference. “Last year Jessie put in place a new approach to reviewing departments in school - and our process is now pretty leading edge. We did work on marking and assessment and worked with the pupils to get their opinions. Jessie led on this and the work she did shifted boundaries in the ways in which we talked to teachers about standards - it put a greater honesty into the relationships.”

Having proved herself in these various

projects, Jessie was also charged with writing the Equity Paper for the governors. “That was a fantastic experience, which gave me real agency over the things we offer as a school and what we need to change and improve on. I was also developed the way we reported on things, making us more accountable and using quantitative data. Writing that paper, and considering the school as a whole helped me really understand things from a headteacher's point of view.”

Leaving a legacy

While it is clear that Jessie's impact at Park High School has been substantial in terms of teaching standards and attainment, Tony goes on to explain that her influence has been felt throughout the school. Coming into a leadership team that had been established for several years, Jessie was able to help the SLT review its practices and processes. “That was important - it wasn't always very comfortable - but it was why I wanted Jessie here, to help us reflect on ourselves. If you want to keep moving you have got to keep having new perspectives.”

Since Jessie's arrival at the Park High, change has been school-wide and a number of initiatives brought in by Jessie have opened up opportunities for some of the most at risk pupils.

Seeing that there was a need to improve the science curriculum and results, Jessie successfully bid for a £30,000 grant to a project called SHINE. The money will enable the school to run a series of extended school courses for disadvantaged children with a talent for science. And because she is staying on for a second year Jessie will also be able to project manage the scheme. “The DCSF felt it would take several months to set up, but Tony and I have convinced them I can do it in six weeks, and as long as they're



in agreement, I'll be able to put it into practice in February while I'm here," explains Jessie. "That is something that has been great about staying for two years, it means I can really see the impact of some of the things I've worked on."

Jessie's commitment to the local community meant she often worked with and brought in outside agencies to support the school's work. Both the Narrowing the Gap initiative, which was designed to level out the achievement divide between boys and girls, and the Black Boys Can Association, which is committed to helping raise achievement for black and Asian boys, were brought into the school to work with groups of pupils. Jessie also got involved with 13 other schools, including famous independents Eton and Harrow on the Hill, through the Independent Partnership, an outreach initiative designed to get schools sharing resources.

Forging the future

Tony and Jessie believe her residency and subsequent second year at the school have worked well because Jessie crucially had an open and honest relationship, with Tony. "We've both been able to say everything we've wanted - and that was key for moving Jessie forward," says Tony.

"Our conversations were frank. We looked at weaknesses and worked on them," says Jessie. "And where I had a skills or knowledge gap Tony would put me on a project to work in that area which then ensured my knowledge base grew. The way feedback was presented was with the view that they wanted me to be the best I could be - and it was always in a positive light."

For Jessie the experience has ensured she really can aim for a deputy headship with confidence. "I feel so ready for this now. Both professionally and personally the last



three years have been vital, and I wouldn't change any part of it. I worked with so many outstanding practitioners and having access to them has been amazing. I know I'll look back in twenty years at this time and think, "Wow I was a lucky girl!"

"Jessie started a ball rolling and it's now being picked up by others. And this is the legacy that Jessie will have left."

And for Tony, who himself retires in the summer, he can feel confident that Jessie's influence will be felt for many years. "I can identify a number of areas where Jessie has had an input with things that will carry on after she leaves, so she is leaving a substantial and successful legacy behind."

