

Case Study: A London Secondary School

This case study is about how a London Secondary school used TASC as one of a series of measures to raise standards.

Background

The school was in Special Measures approximately 5 years before this review and came out about 2 years before this case study was written. Over 50% of the school's pupils are entitled to free school meals, 42% have English as an additional language and 60% of pupils come from single parent families. In addition, at the time of the study the school was one of the top five most challenged schools in the country with regard to pupil mobility.

The school's key aim was to raise standards in Teaching and Learning.

Headline Successes

Over 5 years, the school improved performance: from a starting point of 12% 5 A*-C, the school improved to 58% 5 A*-C and also achieved the school's best ever KS3 results for value added performance.

The school is, at the time of this report, 'fending off' pupils excluded from other schools.

Intake has gone up, results have improved. The school is looking more thoughtfully at GT provision.

Factors which Led to Success

Rigorous consistency, across the school, with regard to behaviour and uniform

More focused teaching across the school

A school-wide emphasis on Teaching and Learning

Paired staff observation and peer coaching

The Role of TASC

TASC provided a framework for developing thinking skills and promoting learning

The school's 'TASC Champion' is AST for English and is on the SMT. The school has a Teaching for Learning staff forum made up of faculty representatives. The forum meets once or twice a term. They looked at TASC as a tool, then had TASC Training. After that, teachers 'had a go', feeding their experiences and findings back to the forum.

Last academic year, the school undertook a Level 7 project with the London GT Learning Network, focusing on Maths, English and Science. TASC was used in lessons, teachers conducted paired observations and fed back to the faculty

Examples of Using TASC

In English, the study of A Midsummer Night's Dream included a lesson using TASC. The study of the poem 'The Lady of Shalott' was enhanced using TASC. A KS3 'text in performance' study was also structured using the TASC Framework.

The English Department has been seeking to move from knowledge to synthesis ie from 'A Project on Shakespeare's Theatre' to 'How would Shakespeare's company of actors have performed this scene?'

In Unit 6 of the English Literature Synoptic, Literacy from WW1 poetry, TASC was used (in the form of eTASC): students used eTASC to make connections...they all got A's in the synoptic paper.

TASC is also used in Science

A two day staff conference provided TASC training linked to individual teachers' CPD. Teachers' response to TASC during the Inset was very positive. Boxes of resources and possible projects were set up. In some cases there was a good fit between subject plans and TASC, in other cases less so.

Impact of TASC

GT provision 'steamed ahead' as a result of this project. It was clear that pupils had been used to being 'held back' in lessons.

TASC gave teachers courage to provide challenge in Maths.

Other Comments

The school has about 20 TAs, who were quite involved in developments. TAs gave very positive feedback about TASC.

Y13 have logged onto eTASC as individuals.

Some Y7 pupils had used TASC in primary schools, so TASC was a useful transition tool.

Preparing for TASC activities was difficult but, once it got going, life became easier.

There have been TASC projects across the school, in every Yeargroup and subject.

Teachers have produced a Unit of Work or a series of lessons using TASC.