

Appreciative Inquiry Recommendation Lead Update

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Recommendation

6. Refine teaching strategies

- Further refine teaching strategies to improve lesson enjoyment, encourage speaking and listening and strengthen understanding also ensuring that teaching is tailored to the needs of the individual child.

7. Developing speaking and listening skills

- Ensure the curriculum and school clubs provide opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, for example through debating clubs.
- Raise awareness of regional and national opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills

Recommendation

10. Enhance curriculum development

Work with partners and labour markets, making more explicit links to future employment.

- Innovate a local curriculum.

13. Enhance skills to respond to special needs

Increase range of opportunities to enhance skills in mainstream schools to respond to Special Educational Needs (SEN), Child Protection Plans (CPP) and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA):

- Share best practice of integrating SEN pupils into mainstream schools.
- Promote vocational opportunities.

Action Taken

- Established a (free) primary oracy network – meeting half termly
- Sharing of good practice
- Further developed the CPD programme – with a particular focus on SEN
- Development of Post-16 strategy
- Development of Skills for Success programme
- ‘Our Children, Our Future’ conference

What is Working Well

- Developing partnerships and joining the dots
- Sharing evidence-based good practice
- Constant reflection on impact – increasingly taking into account the views of children & young people
- Uptake of and access to CPD, particularly around SEND

Our Learning

- Even with free networks and CPD, it is difficult to engage with some schools
- Some of the initial plans have needed to change and adapt due to capacity and in response to the needs of stakeholders
- The focus on building partnerships (relating to all four priorities) has been beneficial and allowed individuals to engage with different perspectives
- Many schools are keen to develop oracy and can see the benefits – but are starting from a low baseline
- The CPD offer around SEND is much improved, but needs further development

Impact so far

- Although the gap in attainment for children in Stockton remains too wide, the attainment of disadvantaged children in Stockton is above the national average for this group on every measure and is consistently amongst the highest in the region.
- Attainment of children with SEND is improving for every measure at KS2.
- Over half the primary schools in Stockton have engaged with at least one of the oracy networks – we have 16 schools registered to participate in the Poetry Slam in January 2026, and a programme of ‘big events’ planned for the year
- Raised profile of oracy – school improvement priority for many

Impact so far

(continued)

- 469 people have attended one of the free training events provided through the DBV funding
- SENCo networks have been reshaped and are now providing more opportunity to share practice and promote school to school support and problem solving
- Skills for Success programmes have shown strong impact for individuals at risk of exclusion – and we have successfully secured a £31K bid from the DfE to further develop the programme
- Careers Leaders Network has been established and is growing – with schools committed to working collaboratively to develop opportunities for work experience and embed careers in the curriculum

Any questions?

