

**GWIST ACCREDITED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMME: EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT BANES**

**PROFESSIONAL (P) MODE**

**A PROJECT REPORT  
9 CREDIT UNIT**

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## **Introduction**

The work, which is reported here, is located within the professional forum of education. I am Head of Year 13 in a non- denominational co-educational state comprehensive school 7 miles from Bristol. The Professional Development issue, which I have researched, is raising boys' performance, which is directly related to my own interests, the Philosophy and Belief department in which I work and from the evidence produced an issue worthy of discussion for the school.

## **The Context for this project**

As a subject teacher at Key stages 3,4,and 5, as Head of Year 13 in the school's pastoral system monitoring progress and progression, the general issue of boys' performance pervaded every aspect of my job. The issue was relevant to how pupils performed and were managed in school as well as how they progressed beyond school with their summative exam results and school references which have consequences for pupils and students as they apply to employers and universities.

The purpose of this project is to show how within my own school I have begun an investigation into what can be learnt from how pupils perform, in both public exams and the school's own internal methods of assessment and how from the issues raised one department has begun to reflect on current practice and implement changes in classroom practice with the expectation that other departments will become interested in the project. The starting point or method employed was to examine the performance of boys and girls in each of the Key Stages of the school.

The evidence collected was from normative testing as in public exam results and the school's own measurement of attainment levels. The results of this investigation have been presented to the Head of Philosophy and Belief and will be presented to the member of the Curriculum Team. I am very aware that this issue is not a national government initiative and therefore the ability of a teacher at whatever stage in their career, department and school to respond has to be within the confines of what will enhance current good practice.

I followed the advice of Kydd 1977 who argued:

'... Professional development, either individual or organisational, begins from a process of reflection on where things are, where we would like to get to and how we can get there'.

This advice has been used to structure this project. I began with an examination of the school's external examination results and internal academic monitoring.

### **Process of reflection. The school's GCSE results**

The school's GCSE Results 1988 – 2000 are shown in **Appendix 1& 2** and show the following data:

- In every year since 1998 the girls' average point score per pupil is higher than that of the boys'.
- Within the last 5 years the smallest difference has been 3:00 points in 1996 and the greatest difference was 8:1points 1997.
- The percentage of boys achieving grade B or better was lower than girls each year since

1988.

- Within the last 5 years the smallest difference was 4% in 2000 and the biggest difference was 14.2% in 1998.
- The percentage of boys achieving A\*-C each year since 1988 was less than that of the girls.
- During the last 5 years the biggest difference between boy/girl performance for those in the A\*-C was 20:9% in 1998 and 9:7% in 2000.

### **A comparison of national data with the school's own data on GCSE results**

I compared the school's own results with those of national DfEE figures quoted in the DfEE publication: 'Teachers' July 2000 stated that overall figures for GCSE results showed that 53% of girls were achieving 5 or more passes at A\*-C compared to 43% of boys. At my particular school in that year 78% of girls achieved A\*-C and boys achieved 65% A-C.

Both groups are performing well above the national average.

Nick Tate from QCA who spoke on Radio 4's 'The Commission' on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2000 produced the following figures:

70% of boys from professional classes achieve A\*-C,

41% of boys from unskilled workers achieved A\*-C

20% of boys from ethnic minorities 20% A\*-C.

The gap between boys and girls is widest amongst the least academically able.

According to John Clare writing in the Daily Telegraph on 18/10/2000 the gap between girls and boys GCSE A-C results was: 12.5% at Secondary Modern Schools

10.7% at Comprehensives

1.5% at Grammar Schools.

The average percentage difference over the last 5 years between girls and boys performing at

my comprehensive school at GCSE level was A\*-C is 15.02%.

### **Questions to come out of the data analysis**

Although it is not always possible to ensure with precision that one's own school can be compared directly with national data, this data begs a range of questions some of which are to be found in the national debate on boy/girl performance:

1. Is the school in a situation where the girls are performing exceptionally well?
2. If this is the case how can teachers enable the boys to perform exceptionally well?
3. Are there bigger differences between the performance of those boys and girls who are less able?
4. Does there need to be a more in depth analysis and comparison of boys and girls who achieve within the D-G range at GCSE at my school?
5. Are these averages applicable to all subjects or are there variations between subjects?
6. Does this pattern of results continue to Key stage 5?

### **Boy's performance differs between subjects**

John O'Leary writing in The Times on August 27 1999 summarised a report into Welsh examination data by Stephen Gorard, Jane Salisbury and Professor Gareth Rees from Cardiff University covering the years of 1992-1997. The researchers concluded there were no significant differences in Mathematics and Science only English and that that the gender gap is more to do with particular subjects, than across all subject areas.

Further analysis of my own schools GCSE A\*-C results in 2000, subject by subject showed that there were differences between subjects on girl/boy performance. They were as follows:

	Boys	Girls
- English	69.2%	87.9%
- English Literature	66.7%	75.8%
- Mathematics	70.9%	66.7%
- Double Science	86.6%	81.5%
- Single Science	15.0%	44.0%

Finally, out of a further 17 subjects taken at GCSE by boys and girls there were 4 subjects where boys scored a higher average point score and these subjects were:

Graphic products, Music, Physical Education, Resistant materials all of which can be regarded as practical subjects. **See Appendix 3.**

Philosophy and Belief was one of the remaining 13 subjects where girls achieved higher GCSE results than boys and the differences over the last 3 years are as follows:

Year	A*-C Boys	A*-C Girls
1998	63.6%	81.5%
1999	55.6%	72.0%
2000	68.8%	78.6%

An analysis of the 2000 GCSE results for the Philosophy and Belief Department showed that for 53.57% of the girls and for 50% of the boys their Philosophy and Belief grade was their highest grade. **See Appendices 3 and 3a**

## KEY STAGE 5

The difference between boy/girl performances is nationally more marked at 11 years of age, 14 Years and 16 years compared to that at key stage 5. The school's results bear this statement out as shown in **appendix 4**. The results at Key Stage 5 show that during the last 9 years there have been two years when the boys average point score per student was higher than the girls and that in 1992 the results were identical and in 1997 there was 0.1 difference. Having

compared the school's data there are trends within the school that match national trends as well as some differences. Therefore I would argue that just as there is national debate on these trends there is a good case for such a debate within my own school. While my project does not answer all these questions; they are important questions, which could form the basis of school discussion.

### **The school's own monitoring system Key Stage 3 Year 8**

Having considered examination data, a further source of information is the schools own internal monitoring system which is based on teacher observation and assessment of pupils' progress, effort and behaviour during the academic year. Data on the current year 8 group includes the NVR, LRT and SAT's test results as well as the school's internal assessment scores given at the end of year 7. The monitoring system in the school uses a scale 1-5 and is normative, where 1 is the highest score and 5 is the lowest. A comparison of the two sets of data raises the question of whether the performance of the boys changes on entering the school and if so why?

London Reading Test:		Non Verbal Reasoning:	SATs:		
			Eng	Ma	Sc
Boys:	100	104	4.1	4.2	4
Girls:	105	105	4.3	4.1	4

Schools' internal monitoring of attainment:

	Girls	Boys	
Av. attainment score	2.343	2.7	<b>(appendix 5)</b>
Av. Science score	2.55	2.56	
Av English	2.18	2.76	
Av Mathematics	2.47	2.55	

In every subject the girls achieved a better score but in Science the difference was 0.01

and Mathematics it was 0.12 and in PE the difference was 0.09.

Technology, French, Music and English were the subjects which showed the greatest variation in the performance between girls and boys. The attainment grade difference was 0.58 for English, 0.64 for Music 0.70 for French and 0.82 for Technology.

### **School's internal monitoring of effort and behaviour:**

#### **Year 7**

- Out of the 40 pupils whose Year 7 assessments on effort and behaviour in December 1999 were identified as either unsatisfactory or in need of improvement 35 were boys. These pupils were then closely monitored by the pastoral team.
- The overall average level of effort shown by the girls was 1.405 compared to the boys whose overall effort was 1.92 (**See appendix 6**)

As part of dealing with the issue of raising boys' performance I will suggest to the Curriculum manager that year groups should be tracked beginning with this year group to identify at what point differences between boy/girl performance start to become marked and in which subjects. There is the further practical issue of what type of behaviour and what level of effort is unsatisfactory and what can be done with classroom teaching to anticipate so prevent or reduce the behaviour and effort, which leads to these grades.

#### **Year 10**

The internal review of Year 10 pupils showed that out of the 18 pupils whose effort and behaviour grades were scoring '3's or '4's i.e. in need of improvement or unsatisfactory, 4 were girls and 14 were boys.

#### **Key Stage 5**

At key stage 5 where the difference in examination performance was not so great as at Key

stage 4 the following pastoral records showed the following:

- i) The Year 12 analysis in March 2000 showed that out of the 47 students who were identified as causing concern in the Sixth Form studies 30 were boys. This same analysis identified 23 pupils whose work and effort required particular praise, 18 were girls and 5 were boys.
- ii) The Year 13 analysis in February 2000 showed that the 4 students who were seriously underachieving in all subjects were all boys. Out of 13 students who were underachieving in more than 1 subject, 11 were boys and 2 were girls.

### **Conclusion of the data analysis**

To briefly conclude whether one analyses the public exam results at Key stage 4 and Key stage 5 or whether one looks at the internal monitoring results at the start of Key stage 3 (year 7) or the start of Key stage 4 (Year 10) or Key stage 5 (Year 12 and Year 13) there is in terms of both academic performance assessed by bodies external to the school and also internal assessment of effort, attainment and behaviour by teaching staff there is a difference in how boys and girls are successfully meeting the criteria set down by classroom teachers and public examination bodies. Clearly there has to be a recognition that there are differences between departments and differences between groups of boys and that there are many factors that influence a young persons life other than school. Nevertheless the evidence as it stands is worthy of discussion with the school's Staff Development manager and Curriculum Manager initially and a trial project with one department.

### **Where would we like to get to?**

From the above analysis the aim is to show that there are issues that need to be addressed and can be addressed to raise boy's performance in school and to raise their effort, levels of engagement and standards of behaviour. To implement such general aims there will need to be an identification of very precise targets that can be measured. The targets will result from an

application of published guidance on the issue of raising boys' performance to the particular needs identified by the department concerned.

### **How are we going to get there - A whole school issue?**

Originally I had anticipated that the of raising boys' performance issue would be initiated through a school inset day but my ideas were revised in the light of a discussion with the member of Senior Management team responsible for staff development. An examination of the planned use of inset time over the forthcoming year showed there was no room for further developments. While it was felt that the culture of the school was such that staff would be willing and interested in the issue, there were currently too many government initiatives that staff were dealing such as the new A/S Level Curriculum, Performance Management, the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, changes to GCSE syllabus' in September 2001 for there to be space in a training timetable to deal with a non-governmental initiative.

### **Existing strategies within the school**

Nevertheless the school already reflects many of the strategies that the DfEE recommend for there to be an increase in boys' achievement. In the July 2000 edition of 'Teachers' the article 'Lets make learning cool' stated that effective whole school strategies included:

1. Creating a culture where it is cool to succeed.
2. Stamping out signs of a macho anti-school culture.
3. Regular one to one interviews between pupils and tutors.
4. Providing mentoring for under achieving pupils. **(see appendix 7 )**
5. Celebrating success.
6. Analysing results in detail and setting individual targets **(see appendix 8 )**.

All these issues have been on the agenda of either the curriculum team or the pastoral team and have been acted upon.

I have read and taken the advice given in the Kirkless Education Services publication 'Raising Boys Achievement' by Wendy Bradford. One particular case study of Thornhill school, which took as its aim the improvement of academic performance of boys throughout the school, advised:

“ Start small and try things out. The project can expand at a later date. Such an approach helps to develop confidence in those who may be a little nervous about whether they are 'doing the right thing'. Starting small also helps the project to develop support as it progresses.”

### **Intended Course of Action**

Thus the intended course of action was to work initially with a colleague who was also researching the topic from the perspective of the Mathematics Department and then with one department, the Philosophy and Belief Department for a year on raising boys' performance. If this first year proved effective then there would be discussion with those members of the Senior Management team responsible for curriculum and staff training to invite interested departments or individual staff to participate in the project. If this second year was successful then there would be consideration of setting aside training time to show how the school can build on what its existing effective strategies to raise the performance of boys.

### **The approach to change within the Philosophy and Belief Department**

While the approach to change is generally following a rational and logical approach as one might find in a Quality Initiative group where precise targets are set, there is also the recognition that implementation of change has to be flexible.

## **The Team**

Change within the department will need to involve all its members, and will be like a journey so that members of the department will learn individually and collectively through sharing ideas and experiences at departmental meetings. I intend to avoid the professional development trap of either being too individualistic or organisationally based and combine my own development with that of the Philosophy and Belief department and later that of the school. During the school year the department provides an opportunity for a student to complete two teaching practices. Alongside the second practice the student has to complete some research within the school. The intention is that this will be connected to the department's interest in the issue of raising boy's performance with a detailed examination of either how we measure the department's performance during the project or an examination of the classroom activities and resources in a Key Stage 3 scheme of work.

## **Motivating Factors**

In order to bring about change it was important to recognise the current position and current practice within the department. In September 2000 the Department of Philosophy and Belief moved into refurbished rooms, the décor and furniture of which was chosen by students, with the consequence that, pupils students and staff now feel they are in a positive environment. Lessons and access to resources are no longer disrupted as they were previously, due to the Timetabling of public exams in the department's teaching rooms. There is now an office and resource base in which the whole team can work together. Working in a more positive environment and removing some de-motivating factors has meant that the department is prepared to take on an issue which to date it has not been able to address.

The departmental team of 3 full time staff and one part time member of staff are committed to raising the standard of what we deliver in the classroom. Not only were the members of the

department aware of the national debate on the disparity between the performance of boys and girls, and the general issues within the school, but also pertinent to the Philosophy and Belief Department was the disparity between the boy/girl take up of the subject at both Key Stage 4 **(see appendix 9 )** and Key Stage 5 once the subject was in the option system. There is strong sense of purpose to make the subject of Philosophy and Belief interesting, thought provoking enjoyable and relevant and appealing to both boys and girls.

Members recognise that in the department each person brings very different strengths. Using Meredith' Belbin's findings in 1981 on the roles people play in groups there is no doubt that each member of the department has something to bring to this project, whether it is the ability to respond to people and make new contacts, suggest new ideas or the ability to follow through a task. As a small department each member is working at full stretch and due to a high workload staff are careful about taking on new developments. However informal and formal discussions have identified raising boys' performance as an issue that already exists within the department **(See appendix 9)** and that if the strategies to be put in place are very precise, can be built into existing schemes of work and the measures are clearly outlined then the project is manageable.

### **Leadership of the project**

Using the concept of the Johari window it was possible to identify the particular needs of the department. There was a need to set aside time to review subject content and teaching styles as well as identify the gap in our knowledge and awareness, of how to raise the performance of boys.

At the April 2000 department meeting I raised with the Head of Department the issue of tackling boy/girl performance and members of the department agreed to further discussion with the intention of making it a departmental SDP target for 2001 - 2002. Since

that date the issue of boys performance has been raised in the department's review of GCSE results 2000 (see appendix 3a ). The issue has been informally discussed by members of the department and supporting material for one unit of Year 8 work was deliberately changed from using animal rights as an issue to do with stewardship to that of nuclear testing. The feedback from staff of the boys' response to the work has been positive. At a departmental meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2001 distributed the summary of strategies enclosed in this essay and a long term action plan which will be the basis of discussion at a future departmental meeting before the end of the academic year in order to formalise the process.

### **Action Plan**

Below is the action plan distributed to the department on 3<sup>rd</sup> April:

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| April 2000 - July 2001 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussions with a fellow colleague researching the issue.</li> <li>- Gathering research material contact Kirkless Education Service.</li> <li>- Small-scale investigation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pre classroom observation discussion</li> <li>- classroom observation (8DC)</li> <li>- post classroom discussion</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Discussion in the dept formally and informally (see appendix 7) agreement for the need to change.</li> <li>- Identify precise areas of classroom teaching to be targeted.</li> </ul> |
| Sept 2001- July 2002   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raising boy's performance becomes a SDP target</li> <li>all members of dept to apply targets</li> </ul>  |
| Dec 2001               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dept meeting to review staff assessment of targeted areas</li> </ul>   |
| Mar 2002               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dept meeting to review GCSE option choices - number of boys review targets</li> </ul>  |
| May 2002               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department meeting review targets</li> </ul>   |

- Present summary of observations to department's line manager
  - Advise findings are part of the Curriculum team's agenda.
- June 2002
- Meet with interested departments and share results
  - Discuss implications for staff resources and training.
- July 2002
- Department to review boys' attainment, effort and behaviour levels and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies put in place.
- July 2002
- Interested departments or staff within a department to agree on implementation of certain strategies for the following term.
- Sept 2002
- Department meeting to widen the department strategy to other classes and include other strategies. Outline how the effectiveness of the strategy will be measured.
- Dec 2002
- Department meeting to review dept / staff strategy

Using some of the staff training budget I purchased for the school a copy of 'Raising Boys' Achievement' by Wendy Bradford, produced and published by Kirkless Metropolitan Council. I issued to members of the department copies of articles from the DfEE website Gender and Achievement (**see Appendix 10**) and a summary of findings broadcast by Radio 4 on the programme 'The Commission'. The purpose of this was to provide staff with more detailed information of the issue.

### **Team Aims**

I will propose to the department that the overall aims are to:

- to raise boys' level of effort.
- to use classroom teaching strategies to cause boys to have a positive attitude to work.

- to ensure that boys are fully engaged in lessons.
- to review use of some exemplary material in schemes of work.
- to review classroom management.

The achievement of these aims can be measured in a range of ways. They include:

- a. the number of boys opting for the subject,
- b. the levels awarded for effort and behaviour in the pupils report
- c. the daily feed back of staff teaching the subject
- d. informal comments from pupils and parents.
- e. pupils own reflective writing on how they are performing in the subject

### **Research within the Department of Philosophy and Belief**

The department has begun to examine both its schemes of work and also teaching and learning styles.

The research into teaching and learning styles began with the Head of the Mathematics' Department observing one of my Philosophy and Belief lessons. The class that was chosen in a pre – observation discussion was a Year 8 class, which is well known throughout the school because the boys and the girls behave very differently and can be difficult to manage. The following observations were made in the post observation discussion that then formed the basis of my targets for this particular group:

1. The boys were more demanding of the teachers' (i.e. my) time than the girls
2. The boys called out more
3. The boys asked for help more often

4. More boys received responses from the teacher
5. In order to maintain discipline I spent more time focusing on the boys and making more eye contact with the boys.
6. While the girls were less demanding of my time they had their 'off task ' strategies that were quiet and less noticeable, such as note passing.
7. The girls were less forthcoming to answer questions in a question answer session.

The benefit of being observed is that the Johari window concept of not knowing what one does not know is identified. In this case the way boys and girls were treated differently in the same lesson due to the dominating behaviour of the boys. From these observations the issue then arose what could be done to improve my performance in the classroom with this class. At this point the research material gathered for the purpose of implementing change on the management of boys to raise their performance became a rich source of ideas as it is intended to be for other staff as the project develops.

The consequence of this lesson observation is that:

1. I am far more aware of the behaviour of the girls and ensure that eye contact is made with all pupils.
2. In order to implement a seating plan for this class there has been a change of teaching rooms in order that this particular class has 2of the3 fortnightly lesson in the same room so that the seating plan can be implemented.
3. The lesson is very structured and divided into small sections.  
behaviour of the girls and ensure that eye contact is made with all pupils.
4. A key benefit of being observed was to recognise that the girls were not getting equal attention because of the demands of the boys.
5. I am far more aware of the behaviour of the girls and ensure that eye contact is made with all pupils .

6. The hope is that while boys' achievements will rise there will also be a positive outcome for girls.

### **Resources for current discussion**

Below is a list of classroom activities that boys respond well to and has been issued to the department. They have been gathered from a range of sources and will be used by the Philosophy and Belief Department to discuss its classroom management targets to raise boys' performance:

Chris' Nickels a Head teacher of an Essex High School contributed to a Radio 4 programme called 'The Commission' which was broadcast on September 8<sup>th</sup> 2000. The purpose of the debate was to discuss the performance of boys and girls in schools. In his particular school, boys and girls are taught separately and below is his list of what strategies are most effective with boys:

1. Dialogue,
2. Well structured lessons,
3. Boys respond well to IT,
4. Boys like competition and don't want to wait for results,
5. Boys dislike being singled out from their peer groups, i.e. by being praised publicly.
6. They need one to one praise.
7. Boys need short - term targets.

Nick Tate from QCA in the same programme argued;

8. Boys read material that is to do with their interests i.e. factual rather than fictional material.
9. Sue Slipman in the same debate argued that boys need male role models so that

fathers should read to their sons.

Kirklees Education Authority has identified the following strategies, which Colin Noble uses in his article called 'Raising Boys Achievement' Autumn 1999 and the points of which are listed below: **(See Appendix 11 & 12 )**

1. seating policy based on effective learning not behavioural management. Seating can be based on gender, friendship groups, random selection, can be changed every ½ term.
2. engaging boys more, by keeping teacher input as brief as possible.
3. cutting tasks down into bite sized chunks. Boys tend to stay on task more if there is a definite end in sight, is enjoyable and has relevance.
4. shared working in the classroom i.e. each pupil has to sign off their partner's work.
5. in question /answer session pupils are not allowed to put hands up for a few seconds to encourage reflection.
6. learning together strategies, which are shared with the whole class. During the lesson the teacher can write positive comments about groups on board.
7. teachers present themselves as learners, by asking pupils at the end of the lesson how it could have been improved

The DfEE website on Gender and Achievement prepared by Professors Jean Ruddock and John Gray of Homerton Coleg, Cambridge summarises recent research on gender and educational performance. In their analysis of classroom learning **(See appendix 10)**

- a. boys are more responsive to learning tasks which require memorising abstract unambiguous facts and rules that have to be acquired quickly.
- b. boys prefer correct answers achieved at speed rather than a deep understanding which requires sustained effort.
- c. By contrast, girls do better at tasks which are:

open- ended

process-based

realistic

require them to think for themselves.

- d. Boys perform better on multiple-choice tests whatever the subject area.
- e. Girls do slightly better on coursework elements.
- f. Girls find timed/ end of course exams less congenial.

Notes taken from Geoff Hannen's TES article 19:4:96

1 in 3 boys spend over 3 1/2 hours per night on computer

1 in 11 girls spend 1 hour per night on the computer

Girls read 3 times the amount of boys

Girls write better reflectively than boys

Boys have better visual-spatial skills than girls

Girls are better at reflective thinking

Girls have neater written work than boys

Boys put their hands up more in lessons

Girls care more about learning

Boys have more pressure to be anti - school

Girls have more detailed plans for career and adult life

Girls have better planning skills

Boys overestimate what they can do and have no detailed plans

Girls check schoolwork

Boys are competitive/ Girls are collaborative

Boys are hierarchical/ Girls are supportive

Boys want action/Girls want discussion

From the age of 11 role models are more important to boys than girls

Boys are anti-school naughty and girls are pro-school well behaved

Geoff Hannen's approach is 'add on'. For the girls keep the dolls add on the construction toys.

For the boys keep the cars but talk with the boys in car play.'

### **The next stage for the department**

What has been set in motion by this project goes beyond the length of one year . As can be seen from the department's agenda for the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2001 (**see Appendix 13**) it is achieving a higher profile in the preparation and planning for next academic year. The next stage will be to discuss precisely what areas of boy performance do we want to change and what classroom strategies, and what teaching materials should we use to achieve this.

### **An evaluation**

Clearly the project is in its infancy. The management of the issue has not followed the one recommended by Colin Noble who reported on the work carried out by the Kirklees LEA (see **Appendix 12.**) This emphasises the importance of raising the issue with all members of the school community, staff, parents, governors and pupils to ensure there are no misunderstandings. The second stage recommended by Colin Noble is for there to be whole school strategies followed by classroom strategies.

In the current climate of constant change and getting to grips with new initiatives it would not be feasible to add a further initiative. The likelihood is that it would fail. Therefore the management approach has been to begin with those staff who will be committed to the project and keep the school's Senior Management Team aware of the department's SDP so that the project does

raise issues for discussion about raising boys' performance and a closer look at the schools statistics.

There is further work to be done on the schools statistics in terms of distinguishing the achievements of different levels of boys. This would enable teachers to be highly focused in their application of strategies.

The great benefit of having a detailed statistical analysis of the school's results is that it provides a concrete base from which to manage change. It provides a basis from which one can persuade staff there is an issue. The research also shows that the school has many strategies already in place to take on the issue of raising boys' performance. This recognition enables one to manage change from a very positive standpoint as one can point to existing practices that can be called upon to support the changes to the ways in which boys are taught. The recognition that not all subjects are in the same position as regards the performance of boys has the advantage that there is the scope for an exchange of ideas.

The benefit of beginning the project in a small way is that through regular evaluation amendments can be made to ensure strong foundations before the project is widened. It also means that with the heavy work load that staff already experience, the changes are manageable and can be paced, with the consequence that more is likely to be achieved.

The practical implications of this research- improving classroom practice, improving what goes on inside the black box is its appeal. Effective management of change needs to be based on a rationale that is to do with improving the performance and experience of children in education.

While the emphasis has been on the performance of boys I have no doubt that the girls will benefit in the improved climate of boys being more engaged in their own learning.

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