

Study Support Essentials

Guidance for School Governors



Working in partnership with,
and funded by:

Department for
Education



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“Extended Learning/Study Support is defined as planned learning activity outside normal lesson time which children and young people participate in voluntarily. Study Support is, accordingly, an inclusive term, embracing many activities – with many names and guises.

Its purpose is to improve young people’s motivation, build their self-esteem and help them become more effective learners. Above all it aims to raise achievement.”

The Extending Learning Opportunities: A framework for self evaluation in study support (2009, 2011) supports the Ofsted self-evaluation process that many schools have decided to continue to use as a tool to enable leadership teams to develop strategies to address attendance, behaviour, teaching and learning, safeguarding children, health and emotional wellbeing.

The framework facilitates Governors’ involvement and understanding of the school’s values, standards, provision for vulnerable children, behaviour, efficient and effective deployment of resources.

This Study Support framework enables governors to ask those questions set out in, The Importance of Teaching – The Schools White Paper 2010.



Foreword

This document is a valuable guide for school governors as it enables them to use the guidance in this document to support their school's teaching and learning activities outside of the curriculum. It empowers governors to ask leading and challenging questions of their school's extending learning opportunities strategy. Thereby support the school to raise pupil attainment, attendance and behaviour which all contribute to School Improvement and Performance.

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Introduction

Study Support is the overarching term that has been used extensively to define planned learning activities outside normal lessons that children and young people participate in voluntarily. Different schools describe these activities in many ways; extra-curricular, enrichment, after school clubs etc. However, it is nothing new, schools have been providing such activities to varying degrees for many years but the purpose and development of those activities has evolved over the years, from simply a sports team for fun, to targeted interventions.

It is now widely acknowledged that in addition to being fun these activities help pupils in their approach to learning, engagement in lessons and attainment, and play a crucial part in a child's education. Increasingly it has become apparent that a strategically developed Study Support programme, as opposed to random ad hoc activities, will enhance the impact for individuals and for overall school improvement.

There are now a number of key changes taking place within education that requires existing practice to be reviewed and reassessed in light of these new developments, not least the Government's emphasis on 'Attainment'. In this context this document reviews the benefits of Study Support to prompt discussions in your school about the role of Study Support and the proposed changes to ensure you maximise the opportunities and benefits available.



Proposed Policy and Inspection Changes

The 2011 Education Bill proposes changes to the statutory reporting areas for school inspection, as well as removing some of the reporting requirements introduced in and after 2005, such as, the duties to inspect well-being and community cohesion. The Bill specifies that inspections in future will report on 'the quality of education provided in the school' and must give priority to:

- the achievement of pupils at the school
- the quality of teaching in the school
- the quality of the leadership in and management of the school
- the behaviour and safety of pupils at the school.

School inspection is primarily about judging performance. Inspectors will continue to base their judgements on evidence of outcomes for children and young people and the quality of the education that contributes to those outcomes, taking account of schools' self-evaluation in whatever form this has been done.

School leaders and governors will continue to be involved in the inspection process and the views of learners, parents and staff will also be considered when coming to a judgement about the school's effectiveness.

The Government has suggested¹ that key questions Governors need to ask to ensure accountability and that there is clarity, understanding and evidence of outcomes within the school, are:

1. What are the school's values? Are they reflected in our long-term development plans?
2. How are we going to raise standards for all children, including the most and least able, those with Special Educational Needs, boys and girls, and any who are currently underachieving?
3. Have we got the right staff and the right development and reward arrangements?
4. Do we have a sound financial strategy, get good value for money and have robust procurement and financial systems?
5. Do we keep our buildings and other assets in good condition and are they well used?
6. How well does the curriculum provide for and stretch all pupils?
7. How well do we keep parents informed and take account of their views?
8. Do we keep children safe and meet the statutory health and safety requirements?
9. How is pupil behaviour? Do we tackle the root causes of poor behaviour?
10. Do we offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which engage all pupils?

Although extra-curricular is the final question, evidence indicates the most effective activities are those that are developed as part of a whole school approach. As schools develop what they offer, how they deliver it and identify the emotional attributes, skills and knowledge acquired by individuals to link their learning experience back to the classroom then the contribution to overall attainment becomes more apparent.

Therefore it needs to be part of the school's overall approach to planning, targeting and personalising individual learning to enable each pupil to reach their potential. This does not mean that it is merely more of the same, as this is likely to offer minimal improvement but neither should it be so different it seems divorced from the school's overall learning ethos as this is a wasted opportunity to equip pupils with the ability to transfer the array of attributes and skills that underpin successful learning between different contexts.

¹The Importance of Teaching – The Schools White Paper 2010, DfE

Governor Study Support Questions

1. What Study Support is being offered? Why?
2. What identified need is each activity seeking to address? If activities are offered at the request of children and young people, do staff identify the inherent learning opportunities they can exploit during the activity?
3. How do staff identify and target children and young people to attend specific activities? Are a range of staff involved in encouraging children and young people to get involved?
4. What information do staff collect about participation in different activities? How is this recorded? Who is responsible for collating and reviewing all this information?
5. What data analysis is undertaken to identify potential links between participation and progress? Who is responsible for this? Does the school management information system help this?
6. What are the individual² and overall³ outcomes from the Study Support offer?
7. Are resources being well spent?

The Case for Study Support

It is impossible to determine an absolute cause and effect between participation and achievement; however, consistently national and individual school evidence demonstrates the overall benefits for children and young people, staff, and the whole school when Study Support is effectively employed as part of the overall learning offer. Study Support is about enriching, enabling and extending the learning that takes place within the curriculum and can offer something to every child and young person.

"...It is about support, support for learning, for adventure, for self discovery, journeys into new ways of knowing, realisation of hidden talent. It is about the achievement that follows naturally when children and young people have the self-confidence and resilience to cope with setbacks..."

"Investing in this indirect route to higher standards is both a matter of theology and science. It requires an act of faith but one allied to strong and consistent research findings. We know that children and young people learn best when they:

- Are actively engaged in something that interests and challenges them
- Collaborate with their peers, helping them and learning from them
- Taste success and fulfillment in achievement
- Are able to transfer their skills from one context to another
- Gain a sense of self belief, self efficacy and self determination
- Are equipped with tools to engage in self reflection and self evaluation

"These may all be features of inspirational classrooms but not always and not for everyone. For most, if not all, children extending opportunities, whether through supportive parents or planned activities, are the vital ingredient in success, both short and long term." Extending Learning Opportunities, DfE (2009, 2011)

²That is, the number of individuals who participated and have demonstrated progress from where they started.

³Individuals who participate make expected or exceed level of achievement, whereas those who don't participate don't achieve expected levels of progress.

In addition to the research evidence, many schools have seen the correlation between attendance at Study Support activities with improved attendance of individuals and groups of pupils in school. Where particular activities encourage and develop the student ownership and opportunities to lead learning for themselves and others then the participants “don’t want to let others down by not turning up” or “don’t want to risk missing out on something”.

The use of apparently expensive external providers can have a profound effect on some participants who respond positively and modify their behaviour with different adults and this can rub off when they return to the classroom and the playground.

Also a range of incentives, rewards and acknowledgement of participation can be utilised as appropriate to the school approach, so certificates, free food, a trip at the end of the programme, a performance, celebration events and inclusion in newsletters and websites etc. can all be great motivators by ensuring participation, learning and achievement are celebrated.

Pupils are able to enjoy the opportunities that Study Support provides. They become competent in pursuing their interests and goals within a more informal and relaxed environment which develops their confidence and self-esteem so they become more willing to try other activities which in turn develops their skills in other areas. It is these experiences that open pupils horizons, their attitude to learning in the classroom, improves attendance and behaviour in school so contributing to the schools performance.

By building on the foundations; to improve pupil attendance, positive attitude to learning, improved behaviour in the classroom, this then leads to improved academic attainment. Overall past research⁴ demonstrated:

- 3.5 grades on Best 5 score, or one more A-C pass at GCSE
- Half a grade in English and maths GCSE
- A third of a level in maths SATs at KS3
- Three quarters of a level in science SATs at KS3.

In 2010, research⁵ into the impact of the Children’s University was published and set out 10 key findings that re-enforced the earlier research findings in terms of the positive affect on attendance, attitude to learning and attainment.

⁴Study Support National Evaluation and Development Programme carried out by Prof. John MacBeath at the Quality in Education Centre at the University of Strathclyde 1997-2000

⁵Evaluation of the Children’s University 2010, Professor John MacBeath, University of Cambridge

A key recommendation was the need to clarify the links between the learning that takes place within activities and the learning that takes place in classrooms.

This means making space to discuss the 'how' of learning so that what young people are able to transfer from one context to another is not only greater self-confidence but also a better repertoire of learning how to learn skills and techniques.

The different levels of development are set out in the table below which has been adapted to include the impact at each stage of development.

Paradigm of study support	A Project "First Steps/Emerged"	A Programme "Emerged/Established"	A Strategy "Established/Advanced"
What is offered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional "extra-curricular" activities Short term projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide and varied menu of learning activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An entitlement to learning and development opportunities
Who is learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willing pupils Targeted under-achievers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most students – a lot of the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of the students most of the time Parents, staff, community
What is the purpose?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoyment & enrichment To stretch the more able To help under-achievers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise attainment across the school To broaden the options for achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continually to improve learning and teaching across the school To enhance value given to education
Impact	On some individuals	On individuals and some aspects of the school	Whole school - success breeds success
Links with the formal curriculum?	Bolted on ►	Built-in ►	Thoroughly embedded

DfE, Extending Learning Opportunities: a framework for self-evaluation in study support (2009, CCCU revised 2011).

Another part of the jigsaw is to engage parents and carers in a dialogue about the school's expectations of pupils taking advantage of the opportunities available but also of the overall benefits from participating. Some parents may have different views to their children about what activities they participate in and the school will need to carefully explain the benefits of the children being encourage but not compelled to attend.

Equally some parents may need support in understanding the benefits of engaging in a wide range of activities in developing social, emotional and academic traits. Inviting parents to celebration events, performances and to participate in some of the activities can all help to bring parents into the school, particularly those who have perhaps been reluctant to engage with the school or perhaps have only had negative connections in the past.

Common Traits of Successful Strategically Developed Study Support

- Governors and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) lead the development of a strategic Study Support programme integral to the ethos of the school and whole school improvement planning;
- SLT promote the purpose and benefits to all staff, pupils and their parents thus creating an expectation that all will be involved in extended learning opportunities;
- Study Support is about the whole child, supporting emotional and social development, encouraging self-regulated behaviour and personal responsibility for actions and choices, developing motivation, aspiration and self-directed learning but the underpinning thread is on supporting achievement;
- Staff identify a variety of Study Support opportunities to address a wide range of issues from confidence building, team work, independent learning, honing skills, making academic progress and developing new interests;
- Negotiation and planning across the whole school to create a strategically structured programme that avoids unnecessary conflicts and assures the quality of what is offered, so:
 1. there is no unnecessary competition for pupils;
 2. a diverse programme is developed that appeals to all interests and identified needs;
 3. core subject support does not clash with lots of other activities;
 4. the delivery of Study Support is managed alongside the need for staff meetings and CPD; and
 5. only quality activities that are a good use of resources and providing value for money are offered.
- There is clarity about the pupils to be targeted and encouraged to attend specific activities to support their particular needs;
- Attendance at individual activities is monitored and reviewed to enable staff to acknowledge and celebrate participation and to follow up with those not attending to find out the reasons why they do not attend;
- Staff interrogate whether Study Support participation is contributing to individual progress and school improvement – initially this will be from observation and review of registers but increasingly as schools record attendance at Study Support activities on their central management information system more detailed analysis will be possible to determine correlations between types of activities, total hours and progress of individuals and groups. Comparison across historical data will also develop understanding of links between Study Support participation and achievement;
- The effectiveness of Study Support programmes are kept under review and adapted in response to feedback from staff, pupils and parents;
- Targeted students are tracked beyond participating in Study Support activities to see what affect it has had on them and informing future decisions about what approaches work.

Recommendations

1	<p>Invest the time in developing a whole school planned programme. Individual activities may only last for a set period but it should be in a context of a whole year or term programme to enable informed choices. Although it will require a lot of work initially, year on year the benefits will be seen to outweigh the planning time.</p>
2	<p>Whatever persuasion, targeting or incentives are used to get students to attend, Study Support should ultimately be a voluntary activity. Developing student ownership through asking what they want, what they think would help them and how existing activities could be improved will further reinforce the positive benefits of being involved.</p>
3	<p>Develop progression routes, either to national certification and qualifications or simply by involving pupils who have undertaken an activity themselves then delivering it to others.</p>
4	<p>Monitor attendance, analyse participation and look for correlations between what is happening to individual pupils and in classrooms to see where it may be contributing to pupils achieving, and even exceeding, their potential.</p>
5	<p>Ensuring communication with staff, pupils and parents is crucial to ensuring that everyone understands what is happening and why, when and how they can get involved and what future opportunities it may lead to. Keeping parents informed and connected is critical, particularly in situations where parents may misunderstand, or place little value on their child's involvement. Where schools are developing their communication channels with parents they are helping to break down not only potential barriers to participation in Study Support but also to wider learning aspirations.</p>

Conclusion

Study Support Programmes benefit everyone.

Benefits of Study Support for Children and Young People

For Children and Young People	...leading to...	...resulting in...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved self esteem greater confidence improved basic, physical and communication skills social skills, including conflict resolution self-management skills, anger management and resilience good habits for learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved attendance, punctuality and readiness for learning improved engagement with schools and learning improved behaviour towards others removal of personal barriers to learning broaden horizons and raise aspirations greater involvement and participation in school community greater responsibility for own learning better ability to visualise 'future self' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> greater achievement in a wide range of areas higher attainment in school improved life chances
Benefits for Parents		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> children and young people are engaged in positive activities in a safe place less boredom and lethargy activities can be shared with siblings and parents/carers improvement in self-image leads to more positive behaviour happier children and young people and families 		
Benefits for Schools and Staff		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners are better prepared for formal learning improved behaviour in school improved conduct around the school and local community reduction in incidents of bullying targeted interventions to support individuals greater involvement and ownership of children and young people in school life positive impact on the curriculum teachers and other adults interact with children and young people in a more informal setting and create different relationships and perceptions 		

Governors will need to support and challenge staff so they are able to clarify the purpose and the benefits in individual schools. By asking questions governors should be able to ensure resources are being used effectively, and that their school's study support strategy is being used as an effective school improvement tool. Ensuring a systematic approach to recording purpose, participants and the correlation between participation and learning progress will ensure this positive contribution is recognised. It is vital that these activities are not dismissed as simply fun things to do but essential to the future achievement of children and young people thereby contributing to the schools overall performance.

Department of Education Study Support Partners

Quality in Study Support and Extended Services

QiSS is part of the Faculty of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University. QiSS supports all schools, education providers, libraries, museums and the partners with the implementing of the quality assurance process. QiSS provides a range of services and training programmes accredited to Masters' level, and publications to support professional development of educational organisation's staff at both a strategic and operational level.

www.canterbury.ac.uk/qjss

ContinYou

ContinYou provides a range of programmes to support children's and young people's learning aiming to help schools improve the attainments and aspirations of pupils and communities by extending the services they offer in and around their premises.

www.continyou.org.uk

The Children's University

The Children's University (CU) focuses on increasing access to high quality out-of-school-hours learning opportunities and raising aspirations for 7-14 year olds, mainly in disadvantaged areas.

www.childrensuniversity.co.uk

University of the First Age

The University of the First Age creates enjoyable learning challenges that enrich lives, increasing aspiration and achievement for young people aged 5 - 25.

www.ufa.org.uk

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