

Learn how to accelerate student progress & results

5 PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR

MASTERING

TARGETED INTERVENTION

SAM Learning

ABOUT SAM LEARNING



Matthew Stringer is the Managing Director of Sam Learning - the creators of the UK's leading Targeted Intervention programme.

Regarded by many schools as the UK's leading light on **progressive and effective Targeted Intervention strategies**, Matthew is always delighted to hear from senior leaders, and would love to demonstrate to you how Sam Learning's Targeted Intervention programme can accelerate your students' progress.

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Proven & Cost-Effective Strategies

The strategies within this guide are real-world examples shared with Sam Learning by a current Head Teacher that has transformed his school from 'inadequate' to 'Outstanding'.

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INTRODUCTION

Whilst I battled the challenge of transforming my school's Ofsted rating from 'inadequate' to 'outstanding', I maintained a continual focus on Targeted Intervention throughout. For me, Targeted Intervention is one of the most powerful strategies a Head or Deputy Head Teacher can employ to achieve a wide-reaching, positive influence across a whole school – from progress to levels of attainment, and exam results to Ofsted ratings.

I've learned that to be effective, all interventions need to be carefully targeted; and there are two key factors that come into play here:

- Identifying the correct pupils.
- Identifying the correct gaps in knowledge and skills.

In my experience schools can spend a lot of time, money, and other resources on solving the wrong problems. Instead effective assessment, collection of data, and the analysis of this data should become the **foundation to your school's Targeted Intervention** plan. This will ultimately achieve greater efficiency and a greater impact.

I encourage my staff to work with an emphasis on ensuring pupils are not consistently or semi-permanently allocated to 'catch-up' / intervention groups. My strategy is to implement and embrace a time-limited intervention concept, rolling students into Intervention groups when they need it and, when they achieve the required standards, move them out.

Then, when a pupil meets the specified expectation, we move on to either another identified pupil or identified area of need.

The following guide provides an insight into the five strategies which I've implemented with great success to tackle Targeted Intervention head on. Hopefully, you will find some of these interesting and easy to implement at your school too!

Enjoy the '5 Effective Strategies for Mastering Targeted Intervention'.

STRATEGY #1

MENTORING SESSIONS

In several school settings, I have introduced a programme of weekly mentoring. This involves every teacher being given a half-day release time in addition to their PPA time. This is non-class based, but not non-contact time.

This results in the teacher delivering the intervention to the pupils they work with during class time.

Underperforming pupils are carefully identified in Pupil Progress Meetings (PPMs - see strategy 5 below). Detailed assessment using a variety of proven tools / resources and analysis highlight the areas in which they are underperforming. These pupils become focus pupils for the weekly mentoring sessions. The sessions are sometimes one-to-one, and sometimes in groups of three or four children. The approach is bespoke, dependent on the needs of the pupil. The mentoring session is learning-focussed, not behaviour-focussed, and gives the teacher the opportunity to directly teach the area in which the child is not achieving.

The areas identified will then be followed up in class by the same teacher and reviewed at the following PPM.

Pupils should not be repeatedly in the mentoring sessions for months/years. Their needs should be addressed very quickly, so they are able to access the teacher at the level appropriate to them.

The language used with pupils during these sessions is direct and honest. Pupils are told what their potential is and where they are underperforming, but are given the support they need to achieve and overcome any barriers.

Effective tracking using proven tools / resources is important to support this approach, and for the teacher to hold themselves to account for the use of their time. Time-saving software can support this and save time in record-keeping.



Matthew says...

As part of my ongoing roadshow visiting all SAM Learning secondary school subscribers across the UK, the area that comes up for discussion time and time again when I meet with Head Teachers, Deputy Heads, and members of the SLT is the importance of time-saving software, resources and strategies, with the focus being to empower the teachers to do what they do best and focus on the most important objective.... helping students improve their performance and grades.

Secondly, the topic of robust data collection showing real-time progress as well as progress over time in micro detail, which then drives action and decisions to accelerate the progress being made by the student.

The fact that SAM Learning excels in both of these key areas, time-saving for teachers and robust easy-to-use data collection means we are able to provide the school and teachers with a toolkit of huge value at an affordable price point.

STRATEGY #2

UTILISE ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS

There are several highly effective online learning platforms available that offer a range of approaches. Careful comparison will reveal those platforms that can be used effectively through after-school booster access.

Every pupil has their own individual login that can track their usage. Pupils can therefore access it remotely; at home, or in any other setting.

Often for underperforming Secondary-aged children, it can be appropriate to explore what is available in the Primary-aged market as they often provide accessible individualised approaches to learning that will provide scaffolding in order to make the secondary curriculum more accessible.

Platforms offer a range of subject matter, often focussing beyond just Maths and English, covering Science, Computing, French and Spanish, but also other areas.

Pupils identified as underperforming in PPMs are given a timetabled intervention slot. This could be before school, during lunchtime or after school (or all three), at least twice per week. Sometimes more – dependent on the needs of the pupil. On occasions, in order for a pupil to meet their potential, it might be necessary for them to attend an intensive intervention programme of 3 or 4 sessions per week for 2-3 weeks.

Teachers can set individual pupil, or groups of pupils, tasks that are targeted to their ability level or tasks that we know from assessment that they require further practise with. Teachers can also set a pass mark for each task - i.e. they must achieve

80% of correct answers in the task before they can complete it and move on.

The teachers can see how each pupil is progressing on each task and identify which questions the pupils are consistently getting wrong.

Once tasks are completed, the teacher can then set more challenging tasks that cover the same objective or move the pupil on to new learning.



Matthew says...

Selecting and purchasing the appropriate online learning platform for the schools intervention needs at an affordable price point is a hot topic. Most online platforms may offer some level of Targeted Intervention as a bolt on or an extra. Not at SAM Learning - let me assure you of that!

We are the industry's leading and preferred supplier of intervention solutions for UK schools. We have re-engineered our entire business to support Targeted Intervention. For us it is now our DNA, our entire platform, our way of thinking, our way of providing exactly what schools require for intervention, our everything! Our employees are former senior teachers, and experts in intervention which ensures that the platform not only provides the very best resources, but our employees do too. We are more than just an online platform; we are a service provider offering dedicated, bespoke, proven, and affordable intervention solutions. Targeted Intervention is our area of expertise!

STRATEGY #3



WRITING RESIDENTIAL

Having identified a group of pupils who were underperforming in writing and reluctant to write, we created an opportunity for them to develop their writing without the distraction of other subjects. We were looking for a relatively low-budget approach that inspired pupils to write.

The group of approximately 12 pupils stayed behind after school on a Friday, with an initial three members of staff.

Pupils changed out of their uniforms, we provided some sports activities, followed by some food.

By 6pm, all other staff members had left the school and the children felt a real sense of excitement about being the only people left in the building.

The pupils built a campfire and a forest schools-trained member of staff lit this. The pupils were led in an activity, writing their dreams for the future. The pupils were encouraged to write their wildest ideas. They could then scrunch them up and throw them into the fire, and watch as their ideas disappeared never to be seen again. The pupils then used wood, making their own 'charcoal' to write words which described the fire on the playground floor.

Back inside, the pupils used these words to start building their inspiring words 'word bank' for the weekend. The pupils slept over in classrooms and the following day, following some initial input, embarked on an educational visit, joined by some additional members of staff.

The first time to London Zoo, the second time to the Olympic Park and then for a tour of the Olympic Stadium and the opportunity to see a West Ham football game.

Throughout the educational visit, there were many opportunities to stop and write, describing the animals, the habitats, and the atmosphere. The pupils were in role as sports reporters and adventurers.

Upon the return from the visit, the pupils, back in the classrooms shared their ideas and helped each other develop and improve their writing. With some excellent outcomes, the pupils' work was put together as a booklet and then presented to the parents when they came to collect their children.

There was a noticeable change in the pupils' attitudes not just to writing, but to school in general when they returned to school on the Monday morning.

STRATEGY #4

GROW TO COOK WITH PARENTS

In almost every setting I have worked, parental engagement and communication have proved challenging. Parents often don't have the time, or suitable work hours to facilitate good communication.

Parents are often put off when presented with the opportunity to attend 'parenting classes' and coffee-mornings can be seen as the realm of the middle-classes, with our hard-to-reach families often seeing this as a barrier to engagement.

I have though found that whenever there is food involved in parental activity, the level of attendance and engagement increases dramatically. Be this a sharing of dishes from a variety of cultures created by the pupils, a cake sale, or cooking classes, I have found all highly effective.

One particular approach has allowed us to address language skills, confidence, parenting skills and developing relationships between parent and child. We set up a programme of weekly sessions. For us, this was on a weekday morning, but it could equally be after school, or at the weekend.

During the school day, we found that our targeted hard-to-reach families were most likely to engage. Some sessions were parents only, some sessions began with parents in one group, and children in another group, with the two groups coming together at the end of the session and some groups had both parents and children together from the start.

We undertook a range of cooking and gardening activities. Some things being planted at the start of the programme, which were then able to be harvested in the final sessions, and cooked with.

At each session, parents and children were able to sit at the end of the session and eat together what had been created. This gave the opportunity for the adult leading the session to model good conversation and interaction between parents and children.

All adults leading the sessions are trained in Philosophy for Children (P4C) which helps them to develop the participants' thinking, conversational and questioning skills.



Matthew says...

An inspirational, fresh, innovative approach, I am sure you will agree, to bringing parents and children together to enhance relationships and accelerate learning and progress.

How learning has developed over the years and as a child growing up in South Yorkshire I genuinely wish I had experienced strategies of this type.

SAM Learning has very much a 360 degree approach to learning, meaning teachers of all levels, students, and parents can all access the resource literally at any time using any device.

SAM Learning provides free-of-charge weekly online webinars specifically for parents. We take great pride in supporting parents by showing them, step-by-step, how SAM Learning works, all the features, benefits, functionality, and much more. This enables the parents to support their child and encourage their learning using our 'proven to improve' solutions.

STRATEGY #5



PPMs

A key strategy underpinning all practice is effective Pupil Progress Meetings (PPMs). There are two elements of pupil progress meetings which in my view help them have the greatest impact.

Managing workload – many schools have pupil progress meeting weeks where all pupil progress meetings take place in the same week. Effective pupil progress meetings will involve key members of staff. If they are all held in the same week, these key staff members will leave the meetings with so many actions, their workload will become unmanageable and many of the actions will not be delivered.

I would support a rolling programme of pupil progress meetings – e.g. Year 7 PPMs in week one, Year 8 in week two, etc. – This ensures that Senior Leaders can focus on a particular year group, or in the case of a secondary setting a particular subject and implement the required actions.

Venn diagrams – The use of Venn diagrams is an excellent way to analyse individual pupil's potential. Looking at pupils on track in English, Maths and Science and analysing the pupils who are achieving in one or two of these areas and not the others, will highlight at an initial high-level those pupils to target. E.g. if a pupil is achieving in 2 out of 3 of these areas, then the third area becomes the area of focus for Intervention.

Underperformance - Taking this to another level, within the subject of underperformance, the criteria within the subject can be analysed to identify the gaps in attainment – these areas can then be specifically targeted, rather than generic 'catch-up' programmes.

CONCLUSION

In all of the above areas, effective communication with pupils and parents is key. It is important to explain to both pupils and their parents the reasons why they are participating in certain interventions.

I do not feel that we should avoid telling pupils that they are underachieving, as long as this is accompanied with a supportive plan to overcome this underachievement, and regular conversations and intervention follow, to provide the necessary support. It is of course essential that when a pupil does succeed, this is celebrated, with them, their peers and their parents.

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Matthew says...

Delivering effective intervention with data evidence of student progress very much at the forefront is such a critical component to any school's success.

A combination of intervention activities, some traditional, some modern, some 'out of the box thinking', and via proven Online Learning Platforms purpose built for intervention will equip the school, the teachers, the students, and the parents with the 360 degree approach required to really drive measurable progress gains, resulting in enhanced GCSE grades.

I would be delighted to hear from you, introduce myself, and act as a sounding board for ideas you may have for implementing effective intervention in your school. I would also like to hear great ideas and more success stories that we can share across all schools via our website so we can all learn and benefit from such an interesting, engaging, and critical area of education.


Thank you for time and continued support.

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