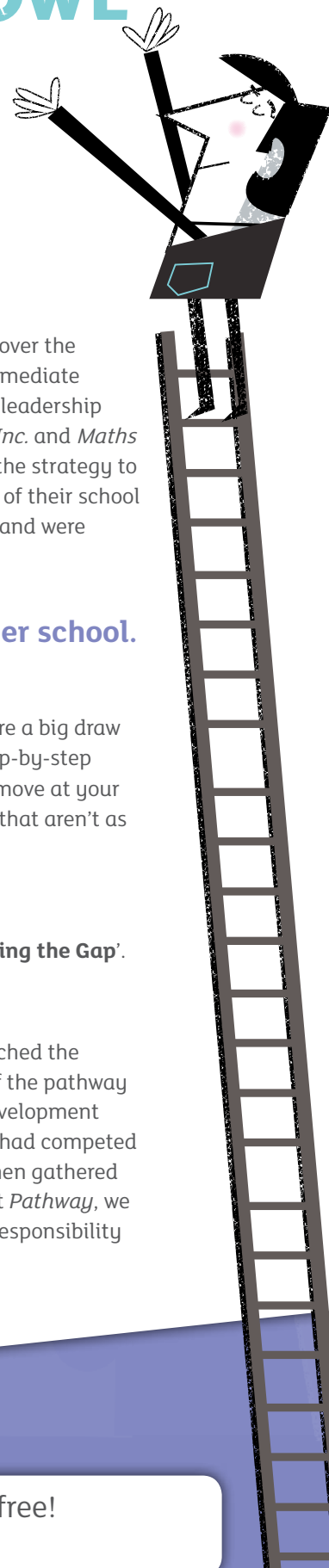


SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT CASE STUDY

Federation of North Walsham Junior and Infant School and Nursery, Norfolk

Clare Fletcher, Executive Head Teacher

Oxford
OWL



Background

When Mrs Fletcher, the then head teacher of North Walsham Infants and Nursery School, took over the headship of North Walsham Junior, the school had just been put into Special Measures. The immediate school improvement priorities were to raise standards in maths and literacy, and to put a new leadership team in place. With the Outstanding infant school already an established user of *Read Write Inc.* and *Maths Makes Sense*, Mrs Fletcher also implemented both programmes in the junior school as part of the strategy to raise standards. The decision was taken to buy into the *Oxford Owl* subscription service as part of their school improvement strategy because they were already logging into *Oxford Owl* for teacher support, and were benefitting from the free online resources.

Here, Clare tells us about her experience of using *Pathways* in her school.

Why did you choose *Pathways*?

Oxford Owl is a user-friendly portal to a range of Oxford online resources, and the *Pathways* were a big draw for our school. For less experienced leaders, they are an incredibly useful tool for providing step-by-step support to make sure you have covered all the issues and got the evidence you need. You can move at your own pace: everything is laid out for you, although you can move more swiftly through the bits that aren't as relevant. For a new leadership team, it models the school improvement process.

Which *Pathway* did you choose?

The school had already identified Pupil Premium children as a key imperative, so I chose 'Closing the Gap'.

How did the process work?

Because the team was relatively inexperienced, I dictated the pace and led the process. I launched the pathway at an SLT meeting last September, using the presentation that was provided as one of the pathway resources. During staff appraisals in Autumn, teachers were told that this was a key school development focus, and each was given a personal target linked to the *Pathway* objectives. By January, we had completed all the baseline audits and created our action plan which we followed through until May. We then gathered together the final evidence once the results came in at the end of June. Because it was our first *Pathway*, we followed it very systematically. Although I steered the process, each member of the SLT took responsibility for specific actions.

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What did you gain from following the *Pathway*, compared with going it alone?

Because time was really tight for me, the *Pathway* was a lifesaver because I could use the resources without having to make or find my own.

For the leadership team, it gave them a really good understanding of a school improvement process, because the structure is very systematic.

I opted to follow it very closely, but for a more experienced leadership team, there is the flexibility to dip in and out of it.

Staff were very aware of the importance of supporting and tracking pupil premium children, so a spin off benefit was the professional dialogue between senior staff and teachers at our six weekly review meetings.

Although we don't run the school for Ofsted, you don't want to be caught on the hop because you forgot something, and using the *Pathway* gave the support and context we needed.

And although I'm quite selective about choosing a *Pathway* to follow from beginning to end, I have looked through all the *Pathway* resources, and taken some of the best ideas which will inform what I end up doing.

Looking ahead, do you intend to work through another *Pathway*?

Absolutely, and I think the Parental Engagement *Pathway* is one of our focuses this academic year. I can't answer the question as to whether we are going to follow it in its entirety as staff have already come up with some good ideas of how we would like to add value to what we are already doing: we know we do a really good job already with our parental engagement. This time I envisage SLT logging into it directly, and using the resources to support their own pedagogy.

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This case study has been published with kind permission and help from Claire Fletcher, Federation of North Walsham Junior and Infant School and Nursery, Norfolk