Working Together for Inclusion

AIMS
1. To improve access to Modern Language study for pupils who are causing concern because of learning difficulties or because of lack of motivation.
2. To gain a better understanding of the factors that hinder learning in Modern Languages and to develop approaches which make it seem easier and more enjoyable.

METHODS
- ML and LS teachers working as a team
- Focusing on a particular pupil or group of pupils
- Sharing perspectives on what it is that makes learning difficult
- Sharing ideas about how to reduce the barriers and how to engage pupils in their own learning
- Collaborating in implementing those ideas with the target group
- Systematically planning, recording and evaluating the developments
- Disseminating good practice within the department, the school and beyond.

PHASE 1

LS staff (MM and LH) observed the class at work in French
LS and ML staff pooled their observations and agreed
- the project framework
- outline characteristics of pupils (document 1)
- a list of possible strategies (document 1)
to focus on.

A Reading programme was developed, targeting SG pupils with low self-esteem

Positive Outcomes from Phase 1
- SfL staff observing pupils operating in MLs and bringing perspectives of the same pupil operating in other subjects
- Time set aside for discussion and agreement (MLs and SfL)

PHASE 2

The 12 pupils who had most benefitted from Phase 1 of the project were identified
Features of Phase 2:
- Pupils now worked mainly in pairs (of pupils with similar barriers) with SfL staff
- Work concentrated more on use of the dictionary and partly on SQA past papers
- The aim was increased pupil self-confidence and autonomy in exam situations.
- Staff pooled dictionary resources, including programmes for increasing efficiency in use of English dictionaries, and programmes in other languages.
Before the S4 prelims: sessions were spent demystifying a General Reading paper with pupils -
Early indications of partial success of the Reading programme:
- previous pass rates for the class at General Level = 63-65%
- prelim pass rates for the class at General Level = 82%
  (However, the majority of identified pupils were just scraping a pass at this stage.)

Positive Outcomes from Phase 2
- increased self-confidence
- decrease in tendency to 'give-up',
- decrease in frustration in prelim Reading exam
- decrease in attention-seeking behaviour in general in class

PHASE 3
- Individualised strategy maps were worked out with the pupils
- Pupils active decision-makers in the process, so have ownership of strategies
- Pupils identified 3 personal strategies (over and above gen. strategies: e.g. don't leave gaps, don't forget the English side of the dictionary, and you can do it!)
- Pupil strategies were put onto card, in some cases 'personalised' and laminated.
- Pupils sat another General paper (4 of the targetted pupils are also sitting Credit)
- All but one pupil passed comfortably
- Pupils then shared their strategies with one another, it was a genuine revelation for many to realise that the process had really been individualised, and that their strategies really were their own. Conversely, some were surprised that things they could do easily had formed targets for others.

Positives from WT Project
From the Pupils' perspective
Now pupils are able to
(a) take more responsibility for themselves as learners
(b) perceive the dictionary as a useful tool
(c) tackle General, and in some cases Credit, Reading without panicking, because they have strategies
(d) get on and leave gaps to come back to, because they have strategies
(e) recognise that they may have to involve guesswork in their range of strategies
(f) spend a reasonable amount of time checking guesses in the dictionary before writing answers in.

From the staff perspective
(a) greater appreciation of the potential benefits to pupils of formally agreed/structured collaboration between MLs and SfL
(b) greater appreciation of how the strengths/skills of MLs and SfL staff combine to give more depth to observation/analysis of learning
(c) tight focus of project has led to more focussed, more productive collaboration
(d) a valuable list of general difficulties encountered by pupils in their reading

Next steps:
- Greater collaboration with the Primary school to try to embed confidence with use of FL dictionaries from the earliest stage
- Gradual introduction of dictionary skills from S1
- Rolling out of programme next year to S4 lower band classes in all languages: with SfL where possible, but trying to find ways of incorporating confident use of dictionary into departmental aims for all SG classes.