

This article, based on the online presentation given to CoLRiC members by Mirna Peach, was published in CoLRiC Impact, Summer 2023. [A recording of this session](#) can be found on our members-only unlisted YouTube channel. The views expressed in this article and in the original presentation are the personal opinions of the author.

## **Embedding catch-up provision in teaching and learning: Lessons learned from Leyton Sixth Form College**

**Gary Horrocks, CoLRiC**



Many students (and staff) have found life challenging since the enormous [educational and emotional disruption of Covid](#). Catch-up support was introduced to help students recover from the lockdown and effects of the pandemic on their academic equilibrium and progress.

In March 2023 CoLRiC was delighted to introduce Mirna Peach, Head of Library Services at Leyton Sixth Form College, to present on [catch-up support provision](#) in the first of our online seminars in celebration of our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The programme aims to support as many students as possible at all levels including GCSE and A Level, embracing most subject areas with a face-to-face or small group focused workshop approach. The catch-up programme was initially run as a summer school but developed as the Covid pandemic progressed.

While the goal is improved knowledge, Mirna is emphatic that ‘instilling confidence and relationship building is crucial to success.’ Student engagement, ‘getting them on board’, ‘building up a rapport’, is fundamental to the catch-up process.

Markers of success include: students catching up with assignments, gaining a deeper understanding of their subjects, submitting higher quality work and improving their grades.

The catch-up programme is embedded in the teaching and learning ethos of the College. Effective communication with all stakeholders across the organisation is key. Catch-up tutors regularly engage with curriculum leads to ensure College-wide awareness of the programme and the 'prominence of its potential in everybody's thinking'.

Students can self-refer and book a tutor online or teaching staff can complete an online library referral form available on the staff intranet if they have concerns about a student. The referral form captures gaps in knowledge, outstanding course assignments, perceived pastoral support requirements, and potential special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) needs. After initial triage-like consultations with teaching staff about each specific case, the student is booked into the programme.

## Support Provision

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Through one to ones

Small groups

Focused workshops

Catch Up Plus (Intensive support)

Extended Library Opening Hours

Summer School

Year 1 to Year 2 transition support

E/U Grade student reports

Exam prep

Study Skills – developing good habits

Aligned to curriculum – Talk to the teaching staff, attend meetings



Rectifying any initial deficit in knowledge is secondary to getting to know the student and exploring their feelings.

*There are usually complex reasons behind why a student is falling behind on their studies, so it is essential that they don't perceive catch-up as some form of remedial punishment, but as a genuine intervention to support them and encourage their progression, mental health and well-being.*

Catch-up tutors meticulously log every detail of a student's interventions and meet regularly to discuss arising issues. The programme support is embedded in all aspects of work and activity from action improvement plans, student contracts, reports and parent evenings. In some cases, student issues are escalated to counselling and safeguarding, and parents can monitor progress via the parent portal.

Every case is reviewed and followed up with teachers to ensure that the student continues an upward study trajectory. Additional catch-up interventions will be organised if required. 'We track ongoing improvement through assessments, grades, behaviour and attendance. We make a point of positively reinforcing achievement through encouragement, praise, conversations with teachers and calls home.'

The statistics speak volumes.

*Our statistics show a marked increase in the achievement of those who used the programme. Between September 2021 and July 2022, we completed 2816 appointments. The number of different students across all subjects and levels was 926. We provided support to EPQ,*

Government and Politics, History, Psychology, Sociology, Law (Btec and A Level), Criminology, RS, Art, Business (Btec and A Level), Economics, French, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Maths, English (A level and GCSE) Travel and Tourism, H&SC, Sports, ICT, Engineering, Performing Arts, ESOL, L1-3.

As you'd expect, pre-GCSE Level 3 was by far the most intensive with all the post-Covid exam anxiety and stress. 'A student may be on top of their subject, but anxious and ill-equipped to deal with study and academic skills.'

**Headline Performance Data**

**Catch Up**  
The total number of appointments between 15<sup>th</sup> September and 6<sup>th</sup> July was 2816. The number of different students across all subjects was 926. Some students sought support for 2 or more subjects so the total number of unique, different students seen was 662. A detailed breakdown of the is below.

**Appointments by Level:**

ESOL	169
Level 1	90
Level 2 GCSE English & Maths	328
Level 2 Vocational	84
Level 3	1948
Level 3 Vocational	157
Other	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>2816</b>

**Appointments by Department:**

Art & Design	44
Business	302
Computing & ICT	104
Education, Leisure and Wellbeing	131
English & Modern Foreign Languages	286
Expressive Arts	6
Humanities	475
Learning Support	227
Mathematics	847
Science	258
Tutorial (UCAS, Study Skills, Etc)	54
Other	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>2816</b>

**Appointments by Subject:**

Art & Design	
Fine Art	19
Graphic Design	1
Textiles & Fashion	10
Media Studies	11
L2 Art & Design	1
L3 Art & Design Vocational	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>

Business	
Business L2	10
Business L3	11
Business L3 Vocational	66
Business Studies	46
Economics	132
Financial Studies	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>

## The data in detail

*Of the 662 who received support, 280 were completers. Of those, 75% achieved their Working at Grade (WAG - minimum average grade) and 49.87% exceeded their WAG.*

*Ofsted visited in December 2022 to review catch-up support at the College: how we identified learners to receive tutoring, the suitability of tutors, how we set up tutoring and how well tutoring was aligned with the curriculum. Most importantly, they wanted **evidence of impact**. What were the wider effects of tutoring in the college?*

Capturing all the data and management information, student interactions, feedback and communication trails is fundamental to the success of any catch-up programme.

*During the research visits, they held discussions with leaders, teachers, tutors and learners to get a sense of the provider's tuition strategy and how well integrated it was. These discussions consisted of semi-structured interviews or focus groups, depending on the size of the institution. The discussions with learners were all carried out in a focus group. Importantly, inspectors also observed tuition sessions during each visit. They wanted to see what was typically being taught and how well tutors were managing sessions. This was essential for them to triangulate the evidence and identify the coherence between the planned tuition strategy and its practical implementation.*

Did Ofsted have any criticisms? 'That the room we used for small group workshops was too small for multiple sessions!'

We asked Mirna for her parting comments on how to make catch-up support a success in improving student attendance and learning outcomes:

*Only a cross-team approach will guarantee consistent support. Focus on engagement with students and teaching staff and the importance of the 360-degree communication of a clear support strategy. Ask yourself in the first instance: what does the College want to achieve? Obviously, concise record keeping, the tracking of progress, evidence trails, alignment to the curriculum and adherence to student needs are essential. You are aiming to support and encourage the development of academic ability, skills and knowledge, building confidence and acknowledging and helping to overcome specific personal particular barriers to learning. In this respect, cross-team working with colleagues in learning support, pastoral care, safeguarding and counselling underpins everything.*