

Lessons from Strategic School Improvement Fund

Naomi Bartholomew-Millar

David Bailey

Alan Edimston

What is the SSIF?

- SSIF is the **Strategic School Improvement Fund**;
- Funding is allocated by the Department for Education for school improvement projects;
- The funding is allocated as a result of a (demanding!) bidding process;
- The bids are typically to support 10-20 schools who have a common need;
- The projects must be **evidence-based** and providers must have a **strong track record** of improvement.



This is identified by poor scores
in these questions on tests

Problem-solving
skills, in particular
reasoning

Improved outcomes
for pupils at KS4

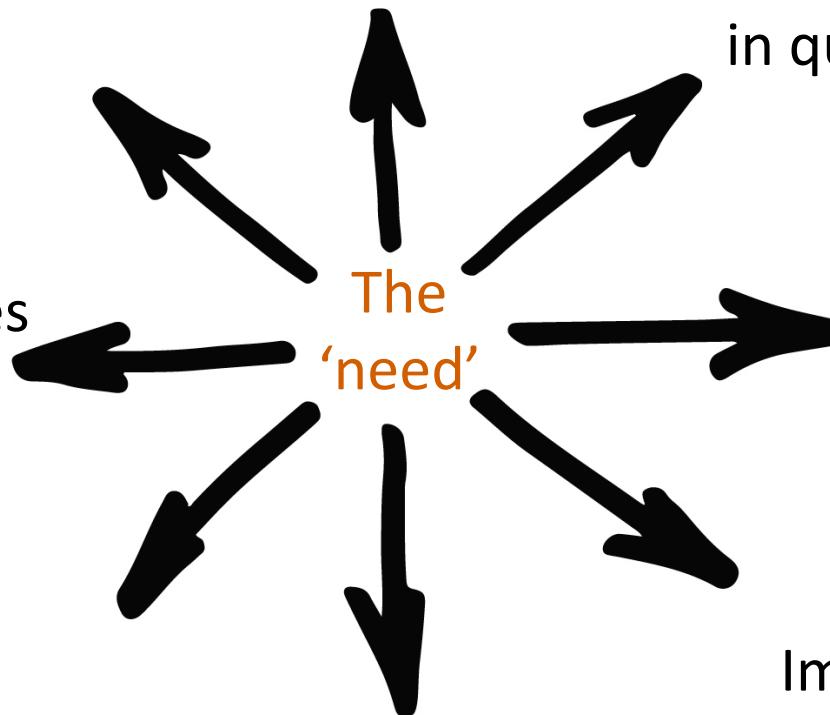
Local employers
have a better
skilled workforce

This affects performance
in qualifications

It also affects
access to further
study and
employability.

Improved
employability and
access to further
training

Improved cognitive
ability of cohorts of
pupils



The bidding process



What does the intervention look like?

There are two parts to the intervention:

- Catch-up numeracy, a TA led intervention.
- CAME (Thinking Maths/Let's Think)

Short term – KS4, and long term – KS3 outcomes.



Cognitive Development

Boys; based on CSMS survey data, 1975 - 78



PIAGETIAN
LEVEL

Formal operational

3B

3A/3B

3A

2B*

2A/2B

2A

1B

1A

Concrete operational

2A/2B

2A

1B

1A

NC
LEVEL

>8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

?

Average

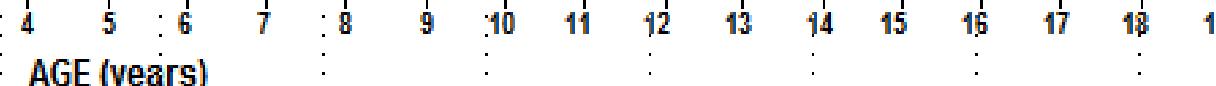
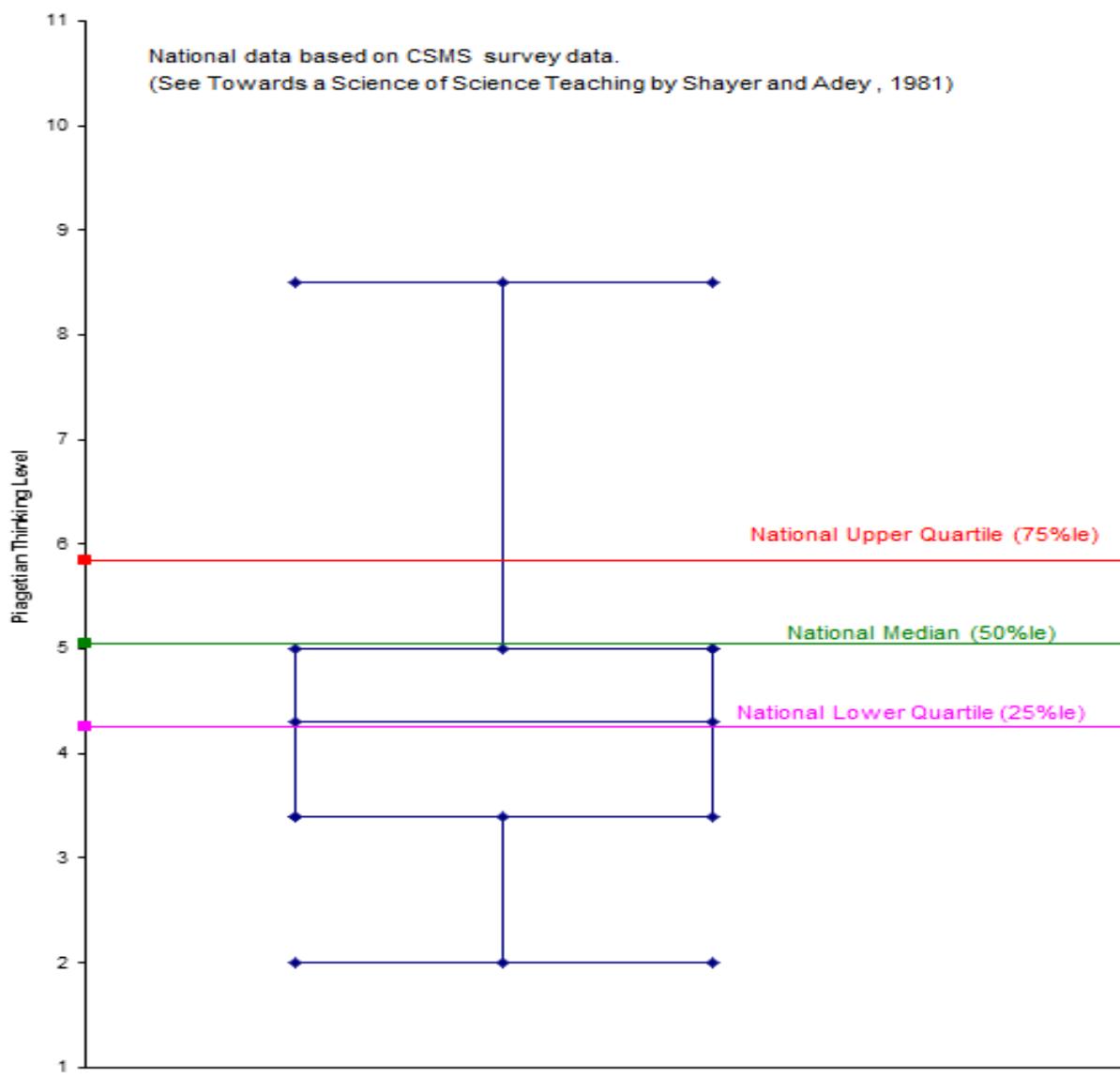
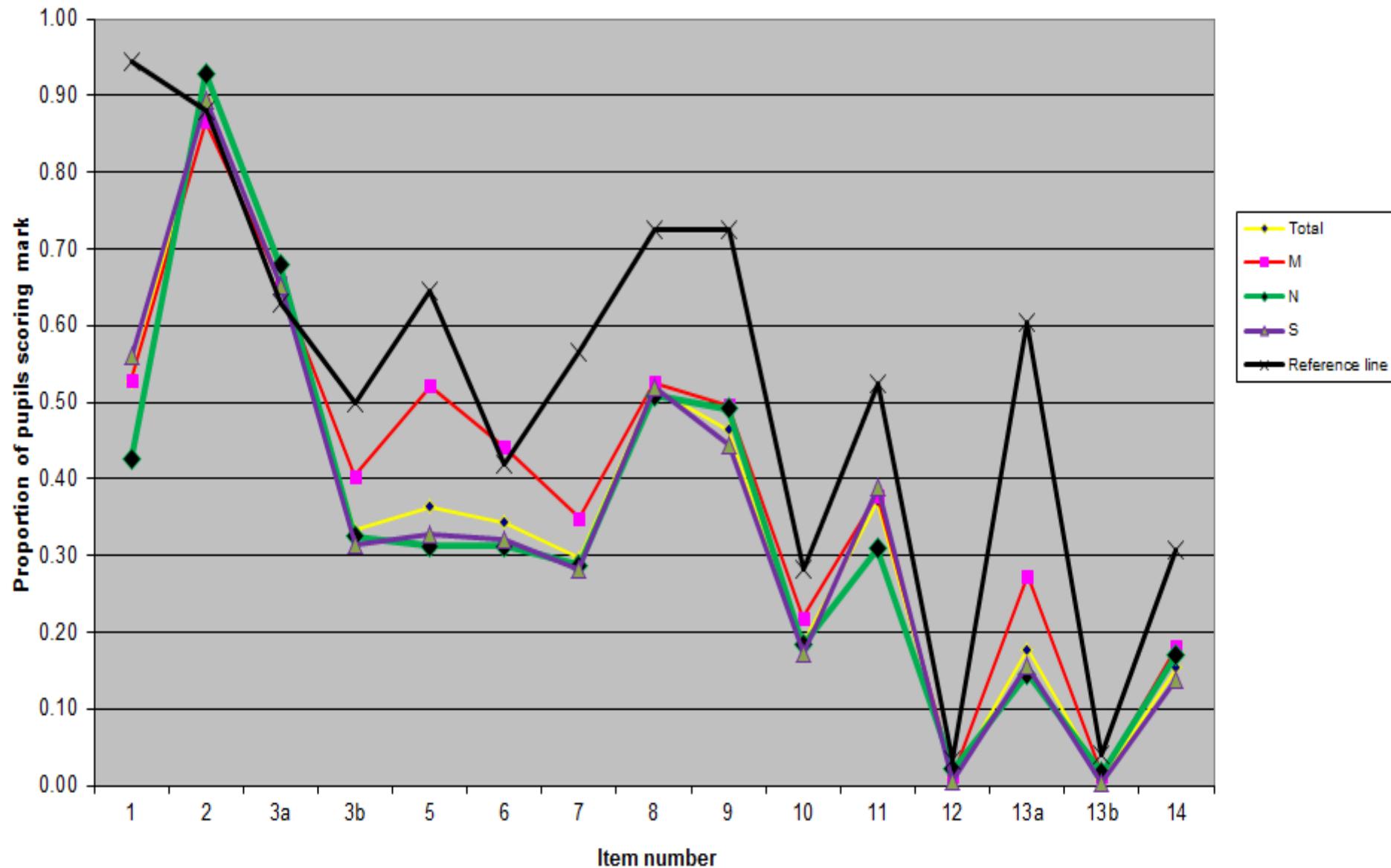


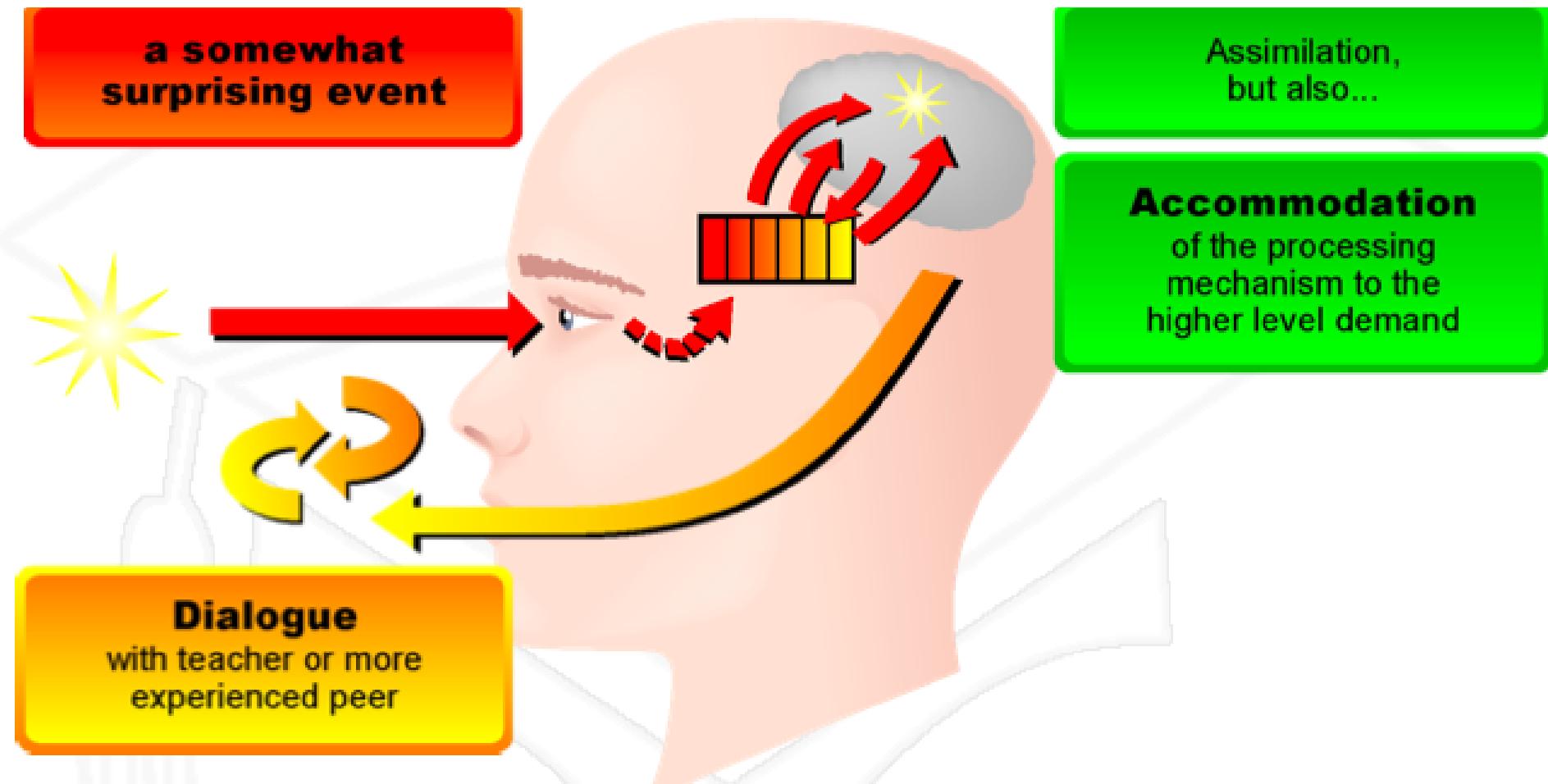
Figure 2a - Yr7 Cohort
(Blue Box and Whiskers plot - Age 11 Years 7 months)
compared with original national data (Age 11 Years 7 months)



SRT 2 results (2013)



Cognitive Challenge generates *Talk*



- “The complex transition from internal to external speech depends on shaping a thought first in inner speech, then in meanings of words, and finally in words.”
- “Talking provokes a representation of one’s thoughts - a process which inevitably raises them to a more conscious plane of awareness so that they can become the objects of reflection and modification.”



The plan vs reality!



Training and deployment of SLEs

Positives

- Engaging and motivated SLE's
- Creating buy in from departments
- Flexible in their working
- Sense of 'in this together'

Reflections

- Foot in the door
- Changing staff
- KS4 priorities
- Delayed start

Response

- Be prepared to be persistent!
- Create a timetable for visits
- Lots of reminders!
- Be flexible, adapt to the needs of the school



Pre and post testing of students

Positives

- Initial data informative
- Large sample

Reflections

- Staffing/ class changes
- Consistency of codes
- Record keeping

Response

- Importance of keeping classes consistent where possible.
- Record of the interventions



Engagement of teachers

Positives

- Positive about the opportunity to develop
- Time to reflect
- Support given
- Window into students cognitive development
- Challenged!

Reflections

- Staffing/ class changes
- Priorities
- Experience
- Ability to impact change
- TIME!
- Network meetings



Response

- Ensure the right people are involved
- Whole department training- respond to the needs of the school
- Embed into practice
- Workload
- Invest in making changes
- Not a ‘bolt on’
- Longer term impact



Engagement with TAs

Positives

- Training benefited all
- Upskilling of TAs
- Material has proven results

Reflections

- Demands on time- pulled for KS4
- Need to further support
- Admin/ recording

Response

- **Greater control over implementation**



Senior Leaders/Governors engagement

Positives

- Vital to the success of the project
- Changes made at strategic level in a number of schools
- Positive impact on attitudes seen in the case studies and testimonials

Reflections

- Not always in the area
- Challenge to engage governors
- Changing the norm

Response

- Used NLG
- Powerful training



Case studies- Impact on my thinking

“I need to be conscious of allowing pupils to get stuck”

“As a result of the program, I consider connections between topics far more, readjusting the SoW as required by current student knowledge.”

“Observing pupils interactions and discussions during lessons can really inform your understanding of how pupils learn, what they know and where you can take them next.”



Impact on school

“The school now only has one formal observation each year and the second observation takes the form of a ‘flipped’ observation. Colleagues are paired up and informally observe each other.”

“The marking policy has been changed to significantly reduce the workload of teachers. Teachers now only mark one quality piece of work per unit rather than all classwork.”

“the maths department is now a more positive and motivated department to work in, reducing staff negativity across the whole school.”



Final lessons

- Buy-in from Governors, Senior Leaders, Subject Leaders and teachers is crucial
- Staff turnover means that new teachers need to be trained along with whole department
- Some teachers adopt ideas and change readily
- Some teachers need to revisit the ideas over and over
- Flexible CPD models are crucial so that all can access to the support
- The duration of the project needs to be long enough
- Administration of data collection shouldn't be underestimated

