Creating Learning without Limits:
Challenge and Success
Baseline assessment?
Escaping from the bottom set

Hargreaves (1982) argues that ability labelling leads to
‘destruction of dignity so massive and pervasive that few subsequently recover from it’
Working as a team

• Living the vision of trust, co agency and inclusion
• Developing a listening school
• Mutual respect
• Enabling and supporting
• Monitoring the quality of learning not the quality of teaching
• Encouraging risk taking
Whole school democracy

Everyone is valued
A participative culture
Weekly mixed age circle meetings
Shared decisions
Learning without Limits

• A study of teachers who rejected fixed ability labelling ‘Learning without Limits’ (2004)

• ‘Creating Learning without Limits’ 2012
Thinking differently about professional learning
Professional learning: Trust

• Listening not telling
• Freedom for staff team to make their own choices and judgements
• Put in place structures that create rich contexts for learning
• Provide open-ended curriculum experiences
Professional learning: Co-agency

• Thinking in partnership
• Making suggestions
• Shared involvement
• Helping bring ideas to fruition
• Feeding in ideas and interesting materials
• Asking questions
• Challenging
• Encourage resistance to safeguard values
Professional learning: Everybody

• Maximise opportunities for *all* staff to learn from each other
• Value different ways of working
• Capitalize on differences to inspire teaching
• Create structures to encourage mutual support
Dispositions within the Intellectual domain

Inventiveness, questioning, openness

*Powerful, autonomous learners*
Dispositions within the Affective domain

- Persistence
- Stability

*Powerful, autonomous learners*
Dispositions within the Social domain

- Generosity
- Empathy

*Powerful, autonomous learners*
Organisation of learning

- Children choose levels of challenge.
- Children choose learning partners.
- Children self assess and peer assess.
- Learning Review days.
- End of year reports form a learning dialogue.

Freedom to learn
Curriculum

- Children contribute to planning
- Authentic first hand experiences
- Open ended challenging tasks
- Engagement in discussions about being a good learner

*Freedom to learn*
Learning relationships

• Relationships within the entire school community are based on trust and acceptance.
The discourse of choice and challenge is embedded from the earliest days in school, and children are involved in self-assessment continually and know that this process is purposeful. Learning review meetings provide a forum for dialogue about each individual child with families, and peer review is based on trust.

Transforming Learning Capacity

Drawing on awareness of how external conditions impact on internal states of mind and how both affect learning capacity:

**Act to lift limits and expand opportunities**
**External**

**Act to build and strengthen positive states of mind**
**Internal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective domain</th>
<th>Social domain</th>
<th>Intellectual domain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase confidence, security, competence, commitment, excitement.</td>
<td>Strengthen acceptance, belonging, contribution, community, solidarity.</td>
<td>Enhance engagement, control, relevance, meaning, reasoning.</td>
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</tbody>
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**THE PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES**

- **CO-AGENCY**: Teachers and children work together for change. Children are recognized as active learners and meaning makers.
- **EVERYBODY**: Decisions are taken in the interests of everybody. The group is a powerful resource for learning for everybody.
- **TRUST**: All children can learn and want to learn, and can be infinitely resourceful given supportive conditions.

These principles work together to guide decision making about what to do and what not to do.

**ENHANCED CAPACITY TO LEARN**

And how are these purposes to be achieved? Through key pedagogical principles.
An opportunity to work together to change thinking …..