

What is Study Plus?

Study Plus is an approach that has been developed by the Secondary National Strategy for pupils at Key Stage 4 who are achieving below national expectations in English and/or mathematics but who have the potential to make better progress with some additional support. In the school year 2007/08 around 450 schools have Study Plus groups.

Study Plus does not have its own accreditation because it is designed to help pupils achieve more highly in their GCSE examinations – not only in English and mathematics but also in other subjects that depend to some extent on literacy and numeracy skills.

A key feature of any Study Plus course is that it does not follow a set syllabus or specification but is designed specifically for a particular group of pupils whose learning needs have been identified. It is in this respect Study Plus might be better described as an approach rather than a course.

The aims of Study Plus

The Study Plus approach is designed for:

- pupils who end Key Stage 3 on level 4 or with a low level 5 in mathematics and/or English;
- pupils currently predicted to attain D or E grades at GCSE.

The aims are to:

- accelerate the progress of these pupils in English and/or mathematics so that they have a better chance of achieving C grades at GCSE;
- strengthen key areas of weakness in literacy and numeracy;
- support pupils' learning and motivation in relation to English, mathematics and other subjects;
- have a positive impact on attainment in two or three more GCSE subjects through the application of literacy, numeracy and general learning skills in context.

Key features of Study Plus

The Study Plus approach is flexible so that provision can be designed by teachers to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils in their own school context. However, every Study Plus course will have six key features:

1. Study Plus is a 5–6-term programme that is timetabled during the school day for two lessons a week – typically pupils opt for it as part of the school's option programme.
2. Study Plus is planned as a sequence of around 20 English or mathematics units or a mixture of the two – each unit lasting 3–4 weeks.

3. Teaching is focused on a cluster of curricular targets that have been identified as relevant to the group and individual pupils by using the English and mathematics progression maps.
4. Support is available for the Study Plus teacher through training and materials.
5. Pupils' learning is supported by another adult, e.g. a teaching assistant or learning mentor, who is attached to the group.
6. Close links to the main learning in English and mathematics lessons.

What's in it for the pupils?

Many pupils moving into Key Stage 4 with weaknesses in literacy and numeracy will have experienced difficulty, if not failure, in these areas over a number of years. They may already have experienced additional programmes intended to help them 'catch up'. So, importantly, Study Plus must not be seen as just more of the same – more English, more mathematics, more catch up.

Pupils opting into Study Plus should experience a sequence of units which are built around topics or themes that are interesting to them in their own right and, within that context, they also receive:

- first-class teaching that helps them with the essential areas of English and/or mathematics that they find difficult;
- support with learning that can be used in other GCSE subjects to improve their work and chances of getting a good grade;
- quality time from a TA who works with them and will help them to review their progress and to plan future success.