

## Sunny Heath High School: A Case Study

The move from mixed ability teaching to ability setting in Year 11 English: What is the impact on teaching and learning?

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## **The move from mixed ability teaching to ability setting in Year 11 English: what is the impact on teaching and learning?**

As a newly qualified teacher in the English Department, I am interested in the changes that have been implemented at Sunny Heath High School (pseudonym) since my training year. This case study examines the impact of one of these major changes: the move from mixed ability teaching to setting in English.

The English Department has been teaching in mixed ability groups at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. This policy on mixed ability teaching is based around the school ethos of an equality of opportunity for all. In the face of the National Challenge initiative to achieve 30 per cent A\*- C grades including English and Mathematics, and after a recent OFSTED inspection, the department was advised to move from mixed ability teaching to teaching in ability sets to further stretch and challenge more able students. Consequently, setting of Year 11 was introduced in September 2009. Year 11 is now composed of one 'Literature Group' (pupils who achieved C or above in English after early exam, now studying for a GCSE in Literature), one 'National Challenge Group' (pupils who should achieve 5 A\*- Cs inc English and Maths according to LA targets) and one 'Nearly National Challenge Group' (pupils who, according to data, teacher grades etc could achieve C with extra intervention). There are three other groups made up of pupils working at or towards D,E,F,G grades.

At the beginning of the 2009-2010 academic year the English Department was scrutinized in a Department Review led by senior leadership. Following this review, the Department was encouraged to set in Year 10 as well as lower down in the school. This move goes against long-standing practice at Sunny Heath. I am carrying out this study to find out if this senior management encouraged change is having any impact on teaching and learning. The study will focus on the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of setting on pupil motivation?
2. What is the impact of setting on pupil progress?
3. What is the impact of setting on teacher motivation?
4. What level of commitment do the English staff feel to this recommended change and why?

## School Context

In summer 2009, Sunny Heath High School saw its highest percentage of A\*- C grades achieved at GCSE level (28 per cent). However, the June 2009 OFSTED inspection identified that pupils made “satisfactory progress to reach below average standards by the end of Year 11”. The inspection suggested that pupils were not being sufficiently challenged and that intervention strategies were required to increase the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics. The report acknowledges a sense of direction from the senior management team:

*[...] The headteacher, with effective support from senior leaders, has now established a drive and ambition for continuing improvement. Senior leaders accept that standards have been too low and are now focusing strongly on raising standards and improving achievement. [...] The embracing of the national challenge initiative is good and is making a greater impact on students' attainment in Year 11.*

*--OFSTED 2009*

Sunny Heath High, a fully inclusive school, serves a number of communities with high deprivation factors. 58 per cent of pupils receive free school meals and 32 per cent of pupils are recognised as having Special Educational Needs. 65 per cent of the Year 7 population have a reading age below their chronological age. The school's ethos is ‘to identify and appreciate the unique potential of each pupil, and develop it to the full in a caring, comfortable and happy environment’ (School Prospectus 2009-2010). The School Improvement Plan 2008-09 advocates focussing on pupils’ enjoyment of the curriculum, as well as achieving standards which are challenging and appropriate to the level and ability of the learner. The staff manual reiterates this focus of taking into account the individual strengths, talents and needs of pupils. The initiative to group pupils in terms of ability for English lessons has been received as controversial issue with regards to the Every Child Matters agenda and Department ethos. This paper will now examine existing literature and research on ability setting and senior management led change.

## Literature Review

Boaler et al (2000) provide a brief history of ability grouping in the English education system; schools from the 19650s were arranged in terms of pupil ability and tended to

reproduce existing class structures, with the wealthy classes together and the working classes grouped together. There was a move against this type of schooling in the 1960s and 70s, when there was a growing desire for equality in education. Mixed ability teaching was very much favoured. In the 1990s, however, with the “post-welfare” society (Tomlinson cited in Boaler 2000, p.632) the focus changed from social equality to ‘academic achievement’ – especially for the most able. Together with the 1988 Educational Reform Act and the introduction of the National Curriculum, mixed ability teaching was replaced by ability grouping in schools across the UK. The creation of an educational market-place has meant that the ever important league-tables are a key focus. (Whitty et al and Ball et al. cited in Boaler 2000, p632). Although there is the current Every Child Matters agenda, with focus on enjoying and achieving in school, a targets-driven performance culture exists also, creating a dichotomy between a push for academic achievement and the commitment to social inclusion (Lunt and Norwich, 1999). The New Labour advice given in The White Paper *Excellence in Schools* that ‘setting should be the norm in secondary schools’ (cited in Ireson et al 1999) to increase attainment. It is interesting, then, that little research supports a strong relationship between setting and an improvement in academic attainment.

#### What is the impact of setting on pupil progress?

Ireson and Hallam (1999) examine different research papers on the impact of ability grouping on academic achievement. They conclude that research findings do not show a strong enough correlation between ability groupings and exam results. They bring to our attention that various studies contradict each other. Newbold’s research (1977), in Ireson and Hallam 1999, is one example that suggests there is no marked improvement in terms of attainment, whereas Kerckhoff (1986) finds that higher ability pupils improve while lower ability groups regress. Kulik and Kulik (1982), on the other hand, find that that higher ability groups make considerable progress, with no impact on lower ability sets. Ireson and Hallam put forward the idea that the differing results may be due to the fact that grouping is only one of several factors that affect the academic attainment of pupils.

In their own research on setting Ireson and Hallam (2005) found very little impact on GCSE attainment in English. They did, however find that lower achieving pupils did slightly better in the setted group, whereas there was a slight negative impact on the higher achieving group. It has to be remembered though that each individual school has its own contributing factors towards pupil attainment. These findings go against previous research that suggests

that setting disadvantages the lower ability pupils. An example of such research is that conducted by Baoler et al, which found that setting polarised access to the curriculum; in lower sets pupil were not given the same access to learning as those in tops sets. However, Boaler's findings do support Hallam and Ireson to an extent in terms of the negative impact on higher ability pupils. The experience in top sets meant that many pupils were left behind in the all too fast pace while in bottom sets the pace of lessons is slower and the work set less demanding. Boaler's research found that "almost all" pupils placed in sets were unhappy in these groups. However, this research focussed only on pupils' personal thoughts and opinions on their groupings and classes. It focussed on qualitative data from interviews and questionnaires and actually focussed on pupil opinions, not how this impacted on actual attainment. Nevertheless, this research is important in placing emphasis on the importance of teacher planning, differentiation and scaffolding in all contexts. Teachers have been found adopting whole-class teaching approaches in both ability sets and in mixed ability groups to the detriment of learners in these groups. This paper will now look further at the implications that setting can have on pupil motivation.

#### What is the impact of setting on pupil motivation?

Research by Oakes (1986) found that students in higher sets had higher aspirations and goals and research by Gamoran and Berends (1987) suggests that pupils placed in lower sets suffer from reduced self-esteem and motivation. Other research suggests that lower ability pupils have low self-esteem regardless of their class groupings (Newbold 1977; Essen 1978 in Ireson and Hallam, 1999). Ireson and Hallam (1999) conclude, after looking at all this research, that self-perception could be shaped by the teachers and peers within these classes depending on the amount of emphasis they place on the ability of the group. Self-fulfilling prophecy and the expectations that teachers have could shape the way pupils perform. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), for example, found that classes performed better where improvement was anticipated (in Dennis Child 1993). The Elton Report suggests that bad behaviour can occur in lower sets because of 'pupils' recognition of where they stand in the scheme of things – at the bottom' (DES 1989, qtd in Hallam and Ireson 1999). The atmosphere within these lower set groups has been found by Gamoran and Berends to be more aggressive and hostile, whereas relationships seem to be more supportive, although competitive, in higher ability groups. Frances Schwartz looks at the behaviour of pupils in various sets. In her research as an observer she notices that bad behaviour in top set classes is covert and often unnoticed by the teacher, whereas bad behaviour in low set classes is

publicly displayed, as if the set is as an excuse for this poor behaviour (1981). Some of the pros and cons of mixed ability teaching will be examined next.

### Mixed Ability Teaching

Research from Kerry and Sands (1982) looks at how in mixed ability classes, tasks are rarely fully differentiated; resulting in not even average pupils being stretched enough (in Ireson and Hallam 1999). In Margaret I Reid's "Mixed ability teaching: Problems and Possibilities" (1983) she interviews teachers and head teachers to find out their opinions this type of grouping. Teachers discussed how the atmosphere in mixed ability classes was co-operative but one major issue uncovered was that teachers felt they had mixed ability groups but had not the adequate training to enable them to deliver mixed ability teaching; thereby disadvantaging pupils of differing abilities. All classes are in a way, though, are composed of a mixed ability of pupils (even within individual sets) and teaching should be differentiated in all classes, not just those of "mixed ability". Research by Boaler et al (2000) found that pupils in sets were being disadvantaged for the same reason; a lack of differentiation for the various abilities in each class. In fact, this research finds that teachers of homogenous groups actually differentiated less and adopted more "restrictive" teaching methods which impacted negatively pupil experience. Oakes (1986) and Gamoran (1987) uncover how the quality of teaching seems to vary between the higher ability classes and the lower ability classes. In this way, pupils are not given the same opportunities to learn and access knowledge. For example, in lower sets where behaviour is an issue, there will be fewer active, pupil led tasks, whereas in higher ability classes pupils have more opportunities for these activities. The more "pupil-led", "co-operative learning" that takes place in mixed ability groups seems to avoid these issues (Reid 1983). Again, the research is pointing towards the quality of teaching as affecting motivation and results, not just the make-up of the group.

### What is the impact of setting on teacher motivation?

Hallam and Ireson (2005) have found that according to most research, teachers prefer to teach the higher ability sets (where sets are in place) and avoid teaching lower ability groups because of behavioural and motivational issues. Moreover, they find that the tasks set in lower ability groups are basic and rigidly structured, with little opportunity for creativity.

This not only would have a negative impact on pupils but also would make the teacher's job more mundane and repetitive.

### What is the impact on management enforced change on teacher morale?

Leithwood et al (2008) claim that leaders influence teacher motivation through the working conditions provided. This is said to impact on teacher performance and thereby ultimately pupil performance also. So the impact on staff morale when management enforce change that seems to contradict strongly held values is questionable. The importance of teacher professionalism and professional values has been recently emphasised. The publication of *Excellence and Enjoyment* (Department for Education and Skills 2003) claims to prioritise teachers' professional judgement" within the classroom. So what happens when the values of teachers are compromised due to national policy? In spite of the focus on Every Child Matters and social inclusion, school leaders seem not have enough latitude to promote social justice because of external pressures. Stevenson (2007) highlights that 'schools have had to reconcile their commitment to inclusion within the wider context of the governments "standards agenda" and its drive to achieve national targets of student performance in standardised tests' (p773); they have had to implement change to survive (Lumby 2003). For staff morale to be maintained, a values driven leadership, or an ability to mediate policy and school values is required (Bush 2003, Gold 2003). Ansoff and McDonell (1990) examine reasons for opposition to change and find that a lack of confidence in own abilities is one factor. Kotter (1996) highlight the importance of supporting staff during periods of change to help them make the necessary transitions, maintaining morale.

This paper will now look at the methods used to elicit information about pupil attainment and pupil and staff motivation as a result of this implemented move to setting.

### Methodology

Data has been obtained via two 30 min interviews: one with the Head Teacher (14 April), and one with the Head of Department (7 April), a 30 minute focus group with English teachers (24 March), analysis of school documentation and pupil questionnaires. This case study approach has allowed for a range of methods to be used, and thereby has ensured the

triangulation of data (Denscombe 2007; Briggs and Coleman 2003). Justification of the research methods chosen will now follow.

The Head Teacher and Head of Department were approached to share their opinions on the move to setting as well as the rationale behind the way the groups were set. The interviews followed a structured set of questions to gain detailed qualitative data (see Asked and is supported by authors such as Brenner 1981 (in Mercer 2007). Bearing in mind that this is a piece of ‘insider research’ (Mercer 2007) I wanted to avoid influencing the responses given and aimed to work as an objective and impartial elicitor of data. Therefore the wording of questions was planned to avoid biases – and these questions were adhered to in order to keep the data reliable (Bush in Briggs 2003). Although others prefer a more conversational approach (Smith 1995 in Mercer 2007), a series of structured questions was adopted to minimise my influence on the responses.

In addition to this, the published OFSTED report (2009), the Department Review Recommendations (2009) and the English Department Response to the review (2009) were taken into consideration. This was to contextualize the decision to set as well as the way the change was managed before hearing about pupil and teacher experiences. According to Klaus Krippendorff (2004), documentary analysis is arguably one of the most useful research techniques as the documents preserve expressions made by crucial stakeholders.

A small focus group lasting 30 minutes was also held with the English teachers to hear their opinions and experiences of the change. This was informal and unstructured, as recommended by Smith (in Mercer 2007), to encourage teachers to talk openly. An advantage of being an ‘insider’ on this occasion was that a rapport already existed between the participants and myself (Hockey 1993 in Mercer 2007). Hopefully this would lead to trustworthy qualitative data, reflecting true opinions. To ensure that this form of data collection was ethical, ‘informed consent’ (Burgess 1989) was obtained from participants to use their opinions in this research piece. In order to protect identities, pseudonyms have been used throughout.

The final method used was a questionnaire, designed to gain an understanding of pupil thoughts on the move to setting in Year 11. A quota sample was chosen because it has the advantage of ensuring that the main categories are represented (Denscombe 2007). Since a quota sample seeks to represent these groups in proportion to the entire population, this questionnaire was conducted on 20 pupils in the ‘Literature Group’, 10 pupils in the

‘National Challenge Group’ and on 10 pupils each from two ‘D-G’ groups. The number of pupils chosen for this sample is the whole population for these classes on the day the questionnaire was conducted. This was to obtain a broad canvas of pupil responses. It is difficult to assess validity in qualitative research (Bush in Coleman 2003) but we will assume that all comments given are true to the individuals from whom the data was elicited.

### Case Study Findings

#### What is the impact of setting on pupil motivation and pupil progress?

Pupils were asked whether their confidence in English had changed at all this year. In the ‘National Challenge group’ 19 out of 20 pupils said that they felt more confident in their new groups. Out of the 20 pupils from the D-G groups, only 5 pupils said that they felt more confident. Pupils were also asked what their personal target grades were for the end of KS4 in Year 10 and this year. The responses show that in the NC group, 10 pupils are aiming for higher grades this year than they were last year, with 1 pupil aiming lower and 9 pupils aiming for the same grade. In the “Literature Group” all pupils had either the same target grades or higher; with many aiming for A and A\* whereas in the grades D-G group, 3 pupils are aiming lower than they were last year. Because of this, it can be argued that motivation has increased in the higher ability groups. Their teacher stated “I’ve never seen so many A grade essays until now and pupils acknowledge that their skills have improved. I’ve told them that they are special and that they should aim high” (Teacher A, 2010, 24 Mar).

Questions were also asked to elicit information about atmosphere and peer relationships, within groups since these affect motivation (Schwarz 1981). Pupils were asked if they felt confident to speak in class and share their ideas. In the D-G classes 10 pupils said that they were comfortable, but another 10 admitted that they were not. In the National Challenge group only 3 pupils said that they did not like vocalising their ideas, while in the Literature group, all pupils were confident with speaking. Previously, in the mixed ability groups, the confident speakers were evenly distributed between groups so pupils had “good speech and behaviour models within each class” (Head of Department, 2010, 7 Apr). The ability setting has resulted in a high concentration of these pupils in the higher sets. According to pedagogical theory such as social constructivism, pupils learn best through speech and interaction, with pupils learning from each other (Vygotsky 1962). If pupils are not willing to share their thoughts in some classes, this could impact negatively on the pace of lessons and on progress made.

Further questions were asked to find out how pupils felt about working together with other pupils in the group. These questions were: “Can you ever get help from other pupils in this new group?” and “Do you find that you learn from other members of the group?” Whereas all pupils from the National Challenge group (bar one) and all 10 pupils from the literature group answered “yes”, 9 out of 20 pupils in the D-G group answered “no” to the first question and 7 out of 20 pupils answered “no” to the second question, suggesting that pupils are finding it harder to learn from each other in the lower ability groups. The difficulties revealed could be a result of the low self-esteem that exists in the low ability groups (Schwartz 1981), which supports a comment from the focus group: “Knowing that they are not in the higher groups has put them off, as has knowing that they are in classes with other weak pupils. There is a lack of confidence amongst these pupils which means that in group work, no one is willing to take the lead on things” (Teacher B, 2010, 24 Mar).

When asked about classroom atmosphere, one student said “I don’t fit in” and another pupil said “I don’t like anyone in here” , “with some of the people in this class I can’t concentrate”. The head of Department commented that “poor mixes” of pupils were avoided through mixed ability teaching. Teachers felt that changing the year 11 classes at this time in the year has mean that there is a “lack of cohesion” (Teacher B). The moving of pupils between classes was problematic, with pupils asking why they did not get the chance to move to the top groups. “Mine feel like they are the ones that got left behind” (Teacher C, 2010, 24 Apr), “I am working against the ethos now of ‘no-one believed in me’”. Teacher b stated, “I can’t say I’ve really enjoyed teaching Year 11 this year because the mixture of kids hasn’t worked. There is a lack of cohesion within classes and the group feels splintered”.

In the higher ability sets, though, pupils claimed “everyone in here is excellent and hard-working” “everyone wants to do well and we learn by sharing ideas”. Schwartz suggests that students' positions in the academic hierarchy are directly related to peer and teacher expectations and that these shape patterns of behaviour. In the National Challenge group, 19 out of 20 pupils found that there was a positive learning environment in their English lessons. Pupils noticed that their peers were working hard in this group and working together. A number of pupils said that the work was “challenging”. They noticed that a highly “interactive” learning approach was used where they were “more involved with fellow pupils”. Pupils noticed that tasks set were more focussed on exam preparation than in their classes in Year 10. The work required them to do “more analysis” one pupil said. In Literature, pupils noticed that the atmosphere was “fun”, “friendly” with an emphasis of

discussion between pupils. A number of pupils noted that the tasks set required them to be “more independent”, because they were in a “higher class”, whereas “in year 10 [they] were given more sheets and help”. Schwartz states that sets “perpetuate and solidify spirals of academic success or failure” with pupils in higher sets cooperating in order to achieve academic success and pupils in lower sets not supporting each other (p100).

Furthermore, the above data reveals that a range of activities are used in the classroom with these classes. There is a slight change in the activities described in the D-G groups “we focus more on one thing”, “I can now use commas and punctuation”. The types of tasks set seem to echo the research undertaken by Oaks and Gamoran which suggests that opportunities for different learning styles are rich in the top sets, with lessons in the lower sets being more teacher led.

Interestingly, for the Sunny Heath case study, pupils were asked if they knew which group they were in. From the 20 pupils questioned in the D-G classes, 18 pupils were not aware of which set they were in. This then somewhat questions Schwartz’ claims about pupils living up to expectations of their position since some pupils were unaware of where they were placed. Despite most not knowing which group they were in, pupils stated that they had been placed here to “get better grades.” One pupil felt that they were in this set because they “did not get a C” and another pupil stated that they were in “set 5 because I can’t write or spell”. This indicates that they were aware that they were not in the ‘top sets’ that other pupils were in. 16 out of 20 pupils questioned in the ‘National Challenge Group’ were aware that they were in a ‘National Challenge Group’. Some pupils called this “second from top group” or “set 2”. 19 pupils put forward the view that they were in this group to achieve a C grade or above. All 10 pupils in the Literature set were aware that they were in “Top Set” because they achieved their C or above in English in Year 10. It is interesting that the peer relationships ascertained via this questionnaire actually supports the behaviours noticed in high and low ability groups in Schwartz’ research – even though bottom set groups were not told that they were “bottom set”. In the Department’s response to the review it was stated: “setting may be advantageous to the few G and T pupils in KS4 [...] The Department are extremely concerned about the effect of setting on the motivation of mid or less able pupils.” The data retrieved supports the department’s initial concerns.

What is the impact of the move to setting on teacher motivation and what level of commitment do the English staff feel to this recommended change?

The Department's response to the review presented strong views against setting and stated that "morale of staff will be severely affected if setting is seen as the only way forward and this will impact negatively on attainment of pupils being taught by demotivated staff". When asked about this during interview, the Headteacher acknowledged the response and stated that these had "passed on" to the external advisors who had recommended the change. Furthermore, the following comments were made:

As the school is currently under the spotlight (through NC) it would be difficult for senior management to contradict the advice being given by National Challenge and Local Authority advisors – particularly if by chance the school doesn't achieve above 30% then the onus would be on the school for not taking the external advice given." (Head Teacher, 2010, 14 Apr)

This supports the claim that the obligation for change arises from a "need to survive in a competitive environment" (Lumby 2003 p191). The teachers do recognise the positive impact that setting is having on the higher ability students, "to see the progress that some pupils have made has been fantastic. From just September to November, 4 pupils improved their grades in Literature [...] you can argue about the enrichment of mixed ability, but unfortunately in this current climate results are more important" (Teacher A). While this is recognised, the progress made by the lower sets is a concern: "I think that kids with lower grades will get poorer results this year", "the focus is on Cs and above and I don't think every child matters any more, especially since there's not the resource of better teachers working with weaker students. The inexperienced teachers are dealing with low ability" (Teacher C). There is a dichotomy between the drive for academic achievement and the commitment to social inclusion, which pose difficult dilemmas for school leaders (Stevenson 2007).

In the Department's response to the review it was stated that teachers would like to observe examples of grouped ability teaching in other departments across the school, but this has not happened. Neither has any training been provided. Teachers also feel that they have been "inadequately supported" through this change: "none of us have a clue what we're doing as we've always taught mixed ability!" ; "I love teaching this group but it is challenging because I have never taught a top set before"; "the EAL factor is not being addressed. I now have one class of children who can't speak English". Kotter (1996) claims that not providing enough support hinders implemented change. The data collected suggests that there is an implementation gap, where those expected to execute the change do not have ownership of it,

making them unsure about the move. Furthermore, Ansoff and McDonnell (1990) suggest that people sometimes oppose change if they feel they do not feel confident in carrying out these changes. This highlights the need to for training, sharing of good practice and support in this move to teaching in ability sets.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

From this case study, one could argue that there will be a cost from either action not continued - the so called “right versus right” predicament (Kidder 1995 cited in Stevenson p776). Getting rid of the ability sets contradicts external advice and will prevent the school from achieving target grades, while getting rid of mixed ability teaching compromises social inclusion and organisational values. Lumby (2003) states that in order to assess whether a change has been successful the following questions need to be asked: has the change been implemented as intended? Has it achieved its outcome? Is the outcome still desirable? Provisional answers to these questions will now follow.

With a lack of opportunity to access quantitative data, strong claims cannot be made about pupil attainment and progress. Nevertheless, the school is predicting its highest ever A\*- C grade GCSEs in English this year. The qualitative data elicited from teachers reveals that higher ability pupils are making good progress towards targets. The findings uncover that the other outcome of the move to setting is the “splintered” lower ability groups, where pupils are displaying low levels of confidence and cooperation. Staff morale has been affected by this. If the “embracing of the National Challenge is good”, as OFSTED commented and if the measure of success is “pupil attainment in Year 11” (OFSTED 2009) the move to setting should have a positive impact on the school. But if the focus is on enrichment, enjoyment and social justice, like the school ethos is, the move to setting has drawbacks in terms of teaching and learning.

Senior management have had little choice but to implement this change because of pressures to conform and to achieve targets. However, in order to achieve the Head Teacher’s vision of ensuring the success of all pupils, teachers need to be adequately trained in how to teach in these setted groups. This will improve the quality of lessons for pupils and will empower the teachers, who at the moment, feel they have little control. This needs to be done as a matter of urgency to inform the planning of future units of work and in order to prepare for a wider move to setting. The political game needs to be played to achieve the National Challenge Targets, but the organisation’s values, which are most important, need to be upheld

in order to maintain staff morale – which is vital when ultimately striving to help each child achieve their full potential.

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### Appendix A: Interview Questions for Head of Department

1. Why has English been taught in mixed ability sets at Four Dwellings until now?
3. Who was involved in planning the changes?
4. What systems are in place for monitoring the impact of this change?
5. What do you think is the impact of this change on teaching and learning?
6. What systems are in place for managing this change?
7. What is your vision for Yr 11 English in the future?

### Appendix B: Interview Questions for Head Teacher

1. What were the reasons for approving mixed ability teaching until now?
2. Why has the department been encouraged to move to setting now?
3. The English Dept's response to the "Department Review" reflects their
4. opinions about grouping pupils. What was your response to this?
5. What is your vision for Year 11 English in the coming years?

### Appendix C: Pupil Questionnaire

Do you know which English group you are in?
Do you know why you are in this group?
Has your confidence in English changed since you changed groups?
If yes, how?
What grade were you aiming for at the end of your GCSES when you were in Year 10?
What grade are you aiming for now?
What is the atmosphere like in your group?
Do you find it useful in class when groups are asked to present their work to you?
Why? Why not?
Do you feel confident to share your ideas with the rest of the group?
Can you ever get help from other pupils in this new group?
Do you find that you learn from other members of the group?
Have you noticed any change in the tasks set in your new group, compared to last year?
Please tick the one you agree with the most: Do you feel you made more progress last year? Do you feel you are making more progress this year? Do you feel that you are making the same amount of progress?