Why Closing the Word Gap Matters

THE WORD GAP IN UK PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- 49% of Year 1 pupils are affected by the word gap
- 69% of primary teachers say the number of pupils with limited vocabulary is increasing
- 43% of teachers say the proportion of pupils with limited vocabulary stays the same or increases by Year 6
- 82% of teachers say these pupils are likely to get worse SATS results

How is the word gap affecting primary pupils? Teachers say:

- 86% of primary teachers say the word gap is a general problem - affects all socio-economic groups
- 56% of teachers say the lack of time spent reading for pleasure is a root cause
- 74% of teachers say that vocabulary deficiency is a high priority in their school
- 22% of teachers say worse school attendance records
- 25% of teachers say more difficulty making friends
- 93% of teachers say lower self esteem
- 22% of teachers say negative impact on behaviour
- 74% of teachers say less likely to stay in education
- 67% of teachers say more likely to be unemployed

FACT: “A child who is not at the expected standard in language at the age of five is 11 times less likely to achieve the expected level in maths at age 11.” (Source: Department for Education, 2017)

FACT: “Children with language difficulties at age five were four times more likely to have reading difficulties in adulthood, three times as likely to have mental health problems, and twice as likely to be unemployed when they reached adulthood.” (Source: Early Intervention Foundation, 2017)

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