Why Closing the Word Gap Matters

THE WORD GAP IN UK SECONDARY SCHOOLS

- 43% of Year 7 pupils affected by word gap
- 60% of secondary teachers say the number of pupils with limited vocabulary is increasing
- 60% of secondary teachers say the proportion of pupils with limited vocabulary stays the same or increases by Year 11
- 43% of secondary teachers said the word gap is a general problem which affects all socio-economic groups

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

- Slower than expected progress in English 91%
- Slower than expected progress in national tests 79%
- Difficulty following what is going on in class 77%
- Difficulty working independently 75%
- Difficulty making friends 15%
- Better school attendance rates 34%
- Greater difficulty getting work after leaving school 58%
- Less likely to stay in education 82%
- Lower self-esteem 80%

Wider life chances are affected:

- 75% of secondary teachers cited insufficient time to teach vocabulary as a main challenge in addressing the word gap
- 59% cited not enough additional staff support
- 95% of teachers say lack of time spent reading for pleasure is a root cause

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