1 Culture, Leadership and Values

Getting school culture right is fundamental to tackling educational disadvantage. The most effective schools:

- Have a three-year strategy for the use and impact of the Pupil Premium.
- Have a collective sense of mission: Everyone deserves an excellent education, regardless of background or barrier to learning.
  - *Is there a mission statement? Is this shared with/understood by the school community? Is Pupil Premium a regular staff meeting agenda/a focus in pupil progress meetings?*
- Have clarity of purpose: The Pupil Premium should be focused on pupil need, rather than accountability targets.
  - *Are individual and whole school barriers for disadvantaged pupils identified? Is there an action plan to overcome these? Is the Pupil Premium spent on appropriate resources to resolve/reduce these barriers?*
- Avoid overly focusing on attainment gaps as this can set limits on what learners can achieve. The Pupil Premium is most effective when focused on raising attainment and readiness (for their next stage of learning or employment) for disadvantaged pupils.
  - *Is the attainment of Pupil Premium pupils improving year on year? Is annual target setting of Pupil Premium pupils focused on attainment? Are resources put in place to ensure this?*
  - *Are disadvantaged pupils excelling in secondary school/sixth form college/university/employment?*
- Recognise that the priority for disadvantaged pupils is consistently high-quality teaching every day.
- Recognise that some learners at risk of underachievement may not qualify for Pupil Premium.
  - *Do whole school actions/provisions impact positively on all learners? Is the quality of teaching and learning good in all classes? If not, how can you improve it? Learners 'without labels' who are at risk of underachievement should also be supported.*
- Build capacity in senior and middle leadership teams for mentoring, coaching, planning, monitoring and evaluation.
  - *Is Pupil Premium a focus on all subject actions plans? Do monitoring activities regularly focus on Pupil Premium pupils?*
- Have tackling disadvantage as a thread running through the school development plan. The Pupil Premium should support an excellent education for all.
- Benchmark against the highest performing schools rather than set limits on what disadvantaged pupils can achieve.
  - *'Expected progress' as a success criteria can set limits on what disadvantaged learners can achieve.*
- Governing boards have ambition for all work with staff to ensure the Pupil Premium strategy will meet needs and have high impact.

"Relationships between adults and students are critical." – SECONDARY HT

2 Whole School

A whole school approach to improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is a consistent feature of successful schools:

- Teachers in the classroom are primarily accountable for the outcomes of disadvantaged learners.
- Where intervention is necessary, there is a culture of early, focused, precise and time-limited intervention.
  - *Are interventions given a time limit with clear success criteria? If TAs deliver the interventions do class teachers observe them and give feedback? Are interventions specific and measured? Are interventions happening more so in EY/KS1/KS3 as concerns arise?*
  - *Are interventions evidence based?*
- Pupil Premium is invested at the point of need, both in terms of long and short term strategy.
  - *Is your Pupil Premium spending reviewed for impact? Is it adjusted to meet the needs of pupils?*
- Every opportunity is taken to build readiness, both in and outside of the classroom.
  - *Do disadvantaged pupils take part in extracurricular activities/trips to develop their understanding of the world? Do lessons challenge pupil perceptions and promote cultural capital?*
- Disadvantaged pupils are given responsibilities and play a prominent role in wider school life.
  - *Are disadvantaged pupils encouraged to be house captains/school councillors/sports team members/take leading roles in productions?*
- Parents are engaged and empowered.
  - *How do you empower your Pupil Premium parents? Do they feel comfortable asking questions about learning? Do teachers ensure they have frequent, informal discussions with parents.*
- In-school variations about how disadvantaged pupils are performing are understood and acted upon promptly. This includes a deeper understanding of the characteristics of learners that are struggling that goes beyond the Pupil Premium label.
  - *Do staff know how their disadvantaged pupils are performing? Do pupil progress meetings ensure actions are taken quickly to improve underperformance?*
- The school day and the school year is adapted to meet the needs of the community.
- Improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is a whole school priority, regardless of whether the proportion of these pupils is very low or very high.
- Funding is spent at the point of need, rather than at the point of external accountability.
- Staff wellbeing is prioritised. Disadvantaged pupils are disproportionately impacted by high staff absence/turnover.
- There is flexibility in the Pupil Premium strategy to meet both long and short term need.
- The learning and teaching environments respond and meet the needs of disadvantaged children, eg building cultural capital.
- Senior leaders (including governors) are aware of appropriate funding sources to support need. Pupil Premium should not be seen as the answer to every barrier to learning.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are strong.
- Disadvantaged pupils have access to support across all aspects of the school day (eg break and lunchtimes).
- Knowledge and the understanding of pupils and their barriers to learning is shared across year groups and phases to support better outcomes.
  - *Data should be a key driver for Pupil Premium strategy. Be wary of making changes on the basis of outliers and short-term anomalies in data.*

"It's all about perseverance." – SECONDARY HT

3 High Expectations

Having high expectations is critically important. It is an entitlement for all. Exemplification of high expectations includes:

- Children are expected to make the necessary progress they need to attain well. 'Expected progress' (or even better than 'expected progress') can still lead to underachievement if starting points are low or if progress has been disrupted. Open, whole school data matters.
- Terms such as 'bottom set, low attainers and low ability' are removed from school vocabulary.
  - *All school staff adopt a shared language around high expectations. Do all staff discuss expectations in terms of age-related expectations and not just progress?*
- The Pupil Premium is not simply used for catch-up funding but is also focused on maximising readiness for success for those working at or above age-related expectations.
  - *Is the Pupil Premium being used to continually challenge and extend higher attaining disadvantaged pupils?*
- Metacognitive approaches are adopted so that learners can understand the value and purpose of failure and have strategies to adapt when things go wrong.
- Disadvantaged and vulnerable learners disproportionately work with the best qualified, most effective staff available.
- Transition between all key stages is a critical time for disadvantaged pupils. In order to build on earlier successes, support is also provided at KS4-5 transition to sustain success.
  - *Do disadvantaged pupils have the texts/resources needed prior to starting in KS5? Do disadvantaged pupils understand the expectations of them in KS5? Do they have the opportunity to discuss and prepare for the transition from KS4-KS5? Who is advocating for these pupils?*
- That thinking goes beyond narrow academic outcomes, for example independence, self belief and employability.
  - *How are disadvantaged pupils prepared for employment? Are social skills modelled/career expectations promoted? Do students understand what is required to achieve their goals? Is high-quality work experience provided for all students?*
- That the most effective, long-term strategy for schools to raise self-esteem is academic success.
  - *How do you promote success? Do staff, pupils and parents understand and experience the link between academic success and self-esteem?*
- That passivity about learning is addressed at all levels – build ownership and empowerment.
- That every pupil has an advocate to support them towards ambitious goals.
- Transition into and out of reception (and later points of transition) take into account the characteristics of learners that are vulnerable to underachievement.
- Is grouping by prior attainment or 'ability' denying disadvantaged pupils access to high-quality teaching, high-quality language, high-quality social skills.

"We expect every pupil to have the choice of going to a high quality university." – SECONDARY HT

"You have to be wary of kindness leading to low expectations." – PRIMARY HT

"Don't wait for parents to ask. Question whether the books children are reading are challenging enough. Check their reading records. Has the child read the book already? Learning is a difficult experience." – PRIMARY HT

4 Understanding Barriers

A clear understanding of how socio-economic disadvantage impacts on outcomes is crucial to a successful Pupil Premium strategy.

- Barriers can lie within schools, with learners and their families. An understanding of barriers should inform your school level, phase/subject level, class level and personalised strategies.
  - *Are barriers to learning identified at all levels? Is there an action plan to overcome these? Is the Pupil Premium spent on appropriate resources to resolve/reduce these barriers?*
- It is important to analyse where pupils have multiple barriers to learning. Think beyond the Pupil Premium label. What are the characteristics of learners that are underachieving?
- A deep understanding of children and their families is critical.
  - *How is historical information about children and families collected and shared across the staff team?*
- Teaching quality has a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged learners. The highest priority for Pupil Premium spending should be ensuring high-quality teaching in every lesson.
  - *Is there high-quality teaching and learning in every class? Is CPD used to develop and improve teaching?*
- Remember that the Pupil Premium is not ring-fenced and leaders have autonomy. Consider how strategies can support informally disadvantaged learners, for example young carers, pupils with a parent in prison.
  - *Do you provide cultural experiences/trips/visits and opportunities to develop the cultural capital, expectations and self belief of your pupils?*
- Maximise the power of Pupil Voice. Listen to learners about supporting their ambitions and goals. Don't mistake low self-expectations for low aspirations.
  - *What do you do to make disadvantaged pupils more aware of the opportunities open to them? Do you widen and extend their expectations and self belief?*
- Build on local expertise for specific groups, for example the work of the virtual school with learners eligible for the Pupil Premium Plus or expertise in children's mental health.
- Barriers may relate to 'readiness' eg work experience, additional secondary school 'pre' visits for very vulnerable children.
  - *Are disadvantaged pupils given additional support prior to and during Key Stage transition? Do they get extra help to organise work experience?*
- Analyse the attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Be wary of averages when determining strategies. Build an understanding of why pupils are not attending.
- Parents recognise the importance of declaring that their children attract additional funding to the setting or school, through trusting relationships and effective channels of communication.
- That better early language is key to later academic success.
- Successful tracking of children's learning through EYFS starts with knowing their prior experience in pre-school and/or Children's Centres.
- That children formerly in care of the local authority may well continue to be vulnerable to underachievement due to complex barriers to learning post adoption.
- FFT research shows that any child who has been eligible for FSM at some point is at risk of underachievement. It is important to identify the 'ever FSM' group when planning for the needs of the vulnerable pupils in your school.

5 Targeted Activities

The purpose of Pupil Premium funded activity should be to ensure disadvantaged pupils are accessing consistently high-quality teaching (or removing the barriers to accessing high-quality teaching).

- Data should inform funded activities. Which phases or year groups are children not achieving as well as they might?
- Progress and attainment data, pupil progress meetings and requests for interventions for disadvantaged pupils are all indicators for Pupil Premium funded CPD. Data should inform funded activities.

→ *Do you use data to support and feed in to requests for funded activities?*

- Before introducing evidence-based approaches consider first how that evidence can be applied to your school context.

→ *What are your school barriers? Use evidence-based approaches which target the barriers in your school context.*

- Pupil Premium funded activity can benefit all children but should disproportionately benefit disadvantaged learners. High-quality feedback is a good example of this.

→ *Does feedback in your school have a positive impact on the learning of disadvantaged pupils? How do you ensure disadvantaged pupils engage and can access high-quality feedback? Disadvantaged pupils may get less feedback on their learning outside school.*

- Consider how best to meet need while avoiding stigmatising learners. Avoid labels.
- The Pupil Premium offers opportunities to empower teachers in meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils in the classroom. This may range from support for significant gaps in prior learning to support with revision.

→ *What input do teachers have in determining Pupil Premium funded activities?*

- The Pupil Premium offers opportunities to build a curriculum that will support attainment and readiness for disadvantaged learners.
- Where interventions are used to tackle gaps in learning, teachers retain ownership of outcomes. Where possible, interventions should be evidence based.
- Is CPD used to improve teaching and learning in specific year groups/phases? Is the CPD targeted and focused on an area of development, with pupil need in mind?
- At the same time, it is important to 'not wait for permission'. Sometimes, innovation and new thinking can help overcome barriers.
- Interventions are unlikely to have a sustained impact if they are not integrated with consistently good teaching.
- Interventions which are not strategically targeted can fail to address key issues.
- If approaches such as smaller class size are used, consider how that improves outcomes? There are alternative approaches such as reduced contact time, pre and post teaching that may be more effective for less cost.
- Is Pupil Premium solely seen as catch-up funding, or is it being used to support those working at or above age-related expectations. Is the Pupil Premium being used to help teachers stretch and challenge pupils, to go beyond what might be expected?
- If funding is used for Teaching Assistant roles, adopt practices detailed in the Education Endowment Foundation report 'Maximising the Best Use of Teaching Assistants'.

"Consistency matters, but marking should meet the needs of the learner, not the policy." – HEADTEACHER

"We use Pupil Premium to ensure our disadvantaged and vulnerable learners can access the highest quality work experience. We ensure employers have a good understanding of our pupils. " – SECONDARY HT

"We need to build cultural capital." – SECONDARY HT

6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Internal QA

Effective quality monitoring and rigorous impact evaluation are fundamental to success.

- Make time sacrosanct to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of your Pupil Premium strategy.

→ *Does your data explain how disadvantaged pupils are performing in all year groups? Does your data inform you about multiple barriers to learning?*

- Don't abandon your strategy based on short-term dips in performance.
- Effective evaluation is about finding out whether something works, not proving it works. We can learn a great deal from activities that are less successful.

→ *Make success criteria specific, time limited and ambitious. Hold yourself to account for this.*

- Internal quality assurance is critical. Are Pupil Premium funded activities being rolled out as planned? Is professional development impacting on classroom practice?
- Sufficient leadership capacity is critical for effective monitoring and evaluation. Middle leaders play an important role here.
- Be wary of poor proxies for impact and confirmation bias, eg 'pupils enjoyed…'
- Know your cohorts and know your children. Does a positive average show a true representation of a class or is it a group of higher attaining pupils masking the lower attainment of others?
- There are numerous success criteria that are useful in tackling educational disadvantage: Improved disposition to learning, better attendance, better behaviour for learning, pupil voice, parental voice. Don't just rely on end of key stage outcomes!
- Effective use of the Pupil Premium is about equality of opportunity, not equality of provision. The very nature of disadvantaged learners means that need can change over time.
- Continually monitor to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are accessing Pupil Premium funded activities, particularly around enrichment and cultural capital.
- Scrutiny of impact measures and clear understanding of how and why they worked (or not) will inform next steps in a more personalised way.
- Governing boards are confident in asking challenging questions about the effectiveness of the Pupil Premium Strategy.

Evaluating impact where there are multiple barriers to learning

Where individual pupils or groups of pupils are the focus of two or more funding streams, have leaders considered how different funding streams work together to support progress? This may be best achieved through sophisticated and thoughtful provision mapping. The analysis of impact and evaluation of spend needs to reflect where different funding streams have been legitimately used together to meet complex needs.

The best headteacher reporting and best governing body evaluation of spend reflects this legitimate pooling of resources to recognise the complexity of need in groups and individuals.

The weakest HT reporting and least effective GB analysis has examined different funding streams in silos, despite the fact they are often targeted at the same pupils. This approach can miss the holistic needs of the learner.

Liz Cornish, Standards and Excellence Lead Commissioner – SEN, Essex LA

7 Accountability and Openness

The highest form of accountability is to the learners in our schools.

- Accountability for the Pupil Premium starts with meeting pupil needs. Adopting an effective, long-term strategy to tackle educational disadvantage will result in improved, more robust pupil outcomes. Overly focusing on end of key stage tests means schools remain 'cohort vulnerable'.
- Hold regular, external peer review of your Pupil Premium strategy, even where outcomes for disadvantaged learners are strong.
- Data about progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils should be accessible to all, and understood relative to local, national and families of schools outcomes.
- Adopt best practice with online statements about school strategy for tackling educational disadvantage. Check with parents whether the reports are clear and accessible.
- Are qualifications sufficiently robust that they effectively prepare students for their next stage in learning or employment? The destinations of pupils is a key accountability measure.
- External accountability should look for:
  - a clear rationale for a school's Pupil Premium strategy
  - carefully targeted activities that enable good learning and readiness
  - robust monitoring and evaluation
  - improved outcomes for disadvantaged learners.
- Listen to parents and pupils about the effectiveness of the school's Pupil Premium strategy.
- Through trusting relationships and effective channels of communication, parents and families are empowered to recognise and understand their contribution to their child's success. Getting this right in EYFS is critical for relationships throughout school.
- A small attainment gap can be a poor proxy for success. Accountability should be focused on the attainment and destinations of disadvantaged pupils.

Taken from 'Pupil Premium Toolkit', Essex

Case Studies

Additional non-contact time for teachers at Lyon's Hall School

Lyons Hall School have made a dedicated commitment to find an additional 50 weekly minutes of non-contact time for all teachers (all at the same time) specifically to focus on disadvantaged pupils. The time can be used for one-to-one or small group learning with pupils, focusing on prior learning, individual learning needs or additional feedback (pupil to teacher) to improve outcomes. Time is also used for research and sharing effective practice; when teachers meet with a specific focus to discuss ideas and theories and also to discuss pupils. The deputy head works with teachers to ensure that activities are high quality and that teachers are held to account for the impact of that time.

We developed this approach in acknowledgement of the dedication of staff and the realisation that in order to improve outcomes teachers needed time – 'to sharpen the saw'.

Teatime Club at Engaines Primary School

Our Teatime Club runs every day from 3.15pm until 5.30pm. It is offered free of charge to our disadvantaged children but is open to a wider group. At the club, children firstly complete homework, reading, practise their sounds or carry out work that teachers have noticed the child needs help with. This has proved to be very worthwhile activity and has definitely had an impact on outcomes. Further, self-esteem has improved as children are completing homework of a high standard and feel equal to their peers. After the 'homework time', children make sandwiches and have tea. The rest of the time is spent playing and socialising.

We felt it important to provide equal opportunities in all areas of school life: from making sure they have enough to eat (we also provide Breakfast Club free of charge) to making sure they are making good progress and attaining well. The opportunity to play with their peers is invaluable.

EY Co-educators in Y1 to support pupils in reaching EYFS goals at Freshwaters Academy

The percentage of our pupils who reach a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of the Reception year is about 60%. I was concerned that so many children were going into Year 1 and starting the National Curriculum without the necessary foundations. Previously, children received support in English and Maths in Year 1 because these are the areas of learning that are assessed. Nobody asks for assessments of children's ability to 'listen to each other's suggestions and plan how to achieve an outcome without adult help' or if they can 'play group games with rules.' Yet without having achieved the Early Learning Goals (ELG) needed for GLD, children will face barriers which are detrimental to their academic and life chances.

So we introduced the role of Early Years Co-educator in Year 1. They give support across the Prime Areas of learning and continue working from the Development Matters framework. Being part of the EYFS team, our co-educator still spends some time in Reception. This helps keep her focused on the purpose of her role (it would be very easy to morph into a teaching assistant), to form positive relationships with the children early on and to gain an insight on their learning journey so far. Working closely with other EYFS staff, any concerns are raised through professional discussions held on a weekly basis. Records are kept and observations are made, just as they are in Early Years.

We have run this model for two years. The results are excellent. We celebrate achievements that might go unnoticed or may not happen at all. As children reach their ELGs, their academic achievements also improve. There is no difference between the achievement of disadvantaged children and their peers at the end of Year 1.

Pre-teaching at Holland Park Primary School

Challenge – to offer disadvantaged pupils an opportunity to become confident with specific curriculum content and vocabulary before they meet it in the classroom.

Solution – classroom staff hold 'pre-teaching' booster classes from 8am to 8.30am twice a week. Staff are paid for 45 minute sessions, which include preparation. Simple refreshments are provided for pupils and siblings are provided with free places in our breakfast club to preclude two journeys for parents.

Payoff – last year, in the pilot Year 6 scheme, staff reported noticeable changes in confidence and attainment. Most importantly for our pupils, they see themselves as the 'experts' when new topics begin that they have already encountered – a great boost in self-belief for some of our less assured children.

Development – depending on available funding and staff, extension to disadvantaged pupils in other year groups; expansion of Year 6 idea of using pupils attending to create 'working walls' to use when commencing a new topic with whole classes.

Adapting the school day, week and year at Burnt Mill Academy

It is hard to pinpoint what makes the biggest difference when working with students from deprived backgrounds. One of the things we have done at Burnt Mill Academy is to extend the school day. Students can arrive from 7.30am onwards and staff are working with individuals and groups from that point. We have a full range of 'study clubs' which take place from 3-5pm. All students are able to attend, but we do target so that the children who need to be there will be. Alongside the academic support, there are enrichment activities including horse-riding, chess club, magic club, giving pupils experiences that they would not otherwise have. Students have a space to work in our resource rich 'study zone' which is staffed after school by a senior teacher.

We only close our doors at Christmas! We open on Saturday mornings for revision sessions as well as a KS3 catch-up group. Our staff go above and beyond for revision and study support sessions in half-term and Easter holidays. Staff are dedicated and passionate and recognise that this additional support is needed.

It is difficult to measure the impact of the extended hours alone. This is one of the many things that we do to support our students. Helena Mills, the CEO, often says it is like playing Jenga. Take one thing away and who knows what might happen? Giving the pupils the access to resources, time and expertise has had a major impact on our students' attainment.