

## **The Pupil Premium – from the updated guide by Marc Rowland (Deputy Director of the National Education Trust)**

- The greatest challenge for our generation is to raise substantially the attainment of the disadvantaged, closing the persistent gap with the achievement of more fortunate young people. No previous generation has managed to do this
- The primary tool for narrowing gaps is high quality teaching and learning. Poor teaching has a disproportionate effect on disadvantaged learners. The good news is that high quality teaching has a disproportionately positive impact on disadvantaged learners too
- Effective feedback, teaching children metacognition, and collaborative learning are all hard to do well, and to sustain. They are about consistently excellent teaching. Spending money on increasing leadership capacity and securing high quality professional development to ensure excellence are critical
- Schools cannot prevent poverty, but they can go some way to reducing its effect if they focus on initiatives that raise attainment by improving teaching and learning, directly or indirectly. Teaching quality counts most
- The language gap is one of the biggest causes of underachievement in later life, especially for disadvantaged learners. The now famous Hart/Risley study was published on the impact of language on young children, revealing that low-income children are exposed to 30 million fewer words than their higher-income peers before age three
- Many SEND pupils will also be eligible for Pupil Premium. This makes adopting best practice all the more important
- High Special Educational Needs (SEND) numbers within disadvantaged pupils can mean that low attainment is more difficult to shift; in some cases deprivation may not be the main determinate in lower attainment
- One of the best measures of an advanced education system is how it treats pupils that are on the margins. How disadvantaged pupils attain has to be the measure of success for an institution. The Pupil Premium cannot guarantee complete equality of outcome, but it can give every pupil in the schooling system opportunities to succeed. High quality teaching and learning is fundamental to narrowing the gap. If you don't get teaching and learning right, disadvantage can devour the Pupil Premium
- The Pupil Premium cannot entirely negate the effects of poverty on learner outcomes, but it is part of the package which schools can use to set children and young people free from the circumstances into which they are born. Limits should not be set on what learners can achieve, in spite of or because of their circumstances
- The DfE has no particular view on using the Pupil Premium funding on whole-school initiatives (for example, teacher CPD on improving marking), as long as the attainment gap is closing, within a school context of generally improving attainment
- The DfE acknowledges the importance of pastoral initiatives to enable a child's readiness to learn. The clear message is that spending Pupil Premium on pastoral initiatives is fine as long as some thought has gone into how it will improve educational attainment, and how the impact will be measured

- The best way to raise pupil self-esteem is for them to be successful in the classroom. Extended time away from learning in nurture groups may help in the short term, but it may risk enhancing educational disadvantage. This is why impact evaluation is crucial
- Ofsted recognises the concern raised by headteachers that there are vulnerable pupils in need of support who are not eligible for Pupil Premium funding – if an intervention is required for 100 pupils and, of these, only 60 are eligible for Pupil Premium funding, then 60% could be funded with Pupil Premium money (for accounting purposes), with the remaining 40% being funded by other sources. This allows schools to meet the needs of all the children in their schools, and use the Pupil Premium funding to create economies of scale - Ofsted highlighted this approach in their second report on the Pupil Premium (Feb 2013)
- Evidence – the Education Endowment Foundation website says: *it is clear that different ways of spending school budgets can have very different impacts on pupil attainment, and choosing what to prioritise is not easy. Even once a decision to implement a particular strategy has been taken there are a wide variety of factors which determine its impact. We believe that educational research can help schools get the maximum 'educational bang for their buck', both in terms of making an initial choice between strategies, and in implementing a strategy as effectively as possible*
- The NFER research report, Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Articulating Success and Good Practice, highlights seven distinct 'building blocks of success' these are:
  - Whole school ethos of attainment for all – schools have an ethos of high attainment for all pupils and avoid stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as all facing similar barriers or as having less potential to succeed
  - Addressing behaviour and attendance – effective behaviour strategies are in place, respond quickly to poor attendance and provide strong social and emotional support, including through working with families
  - High quality teaching for all – emphasise 'quality first teaching' and provide consistently high standards by setting expectations, monitoring performance and sharing best practice
  - Meeting individual learning needs – staff identify each pupil's challenges and interests. Seek the best strategies to help each pupil make the next step in his or her learning. Individual support is provided for specific learning needs and group support for pupils with similar needs
  - Deploying staff effectively – schools devolve responsibility to frontline staff, use their best teachers to work with pupils who need the most support and train teaching assistants to support pupils' learning
  - Data driven and responding to evidence – teachers use data to identify pupils' learning needs, review progress every few weeks and address underperformance quickly. Schools use evidence to make decisions about their support strategies
  - Clear, responsive leadership – Senior leaders set ever higher aspirations and lead by example. They hold all staff accountable for raising attainment, rather than accepting low aspirations and variable performance. They share their thinking and invest in staff training