

Background and legal context

The most important factor in predicting a child's future academic attainment is prior attainment.

The next most important factor is poverty. Material deprivation can influence educational outcomes by reducing the educational resources that families can provide and by adversely affecting the home environment. Deprivation is commonly associated with other factors which can influence children's outcomes: ill health; family stress; low levels of parental education and parental involvement in their children's education; low levels of cultural and social capital; and low aspirations.

As a result, there is a wide gap between the attainment of pupils from deprived backgrounds and others at all educational stages. The additional funding provided through the pupil premium was introduced by the government in April 2011 in order to help schools close this gap. Entitlement to free school meals (FSM) is used as a proxy for deprivation. A fixed amount, which is expected to rise year-on-year while the coalition government is in office, is allocated to schools for each pupil registered for FSM at any point in the last six years (known as 'Ever 6 FSM'). Schools also receive funding for children who have been looked after continuously for more than six months, and children of service personnel.

The Department for Education has stated that schools: 'are free to spend the pupil premium as they see fit'. However, as with all public money schools are required to spend the grant for the purpose that it was intended and will be held accountable through the following:

- the performance tables which show the performance of disadvantaged pupils compared with their peers
- the Ofsted inspection framework, under which inspectors focus on the attainment of pupil groups, in particular those who attract the pupil premium
- the annual reports for parents that schools are required to publish online.

Principles

- Expectations are high for all pupils and individuals. We do not equate deprivation and challenge with low ability.
- Not all pupils who qualify for FSM are socially disadvantaged and not all socially disadvantaged pupils qualify or are registered for FSM. We therefore focus on the needs and levels of progress of all pupils.
- All teaching and learning strategies are designed to meet the needs of individuals and groups. Additional support is integrated into the teaching programme.
- Research, trialling and self-evaluation are used in order to allocate the funding to activities that are most likely to have an impact on achievement.
- In providing support we will not socially isolate pupils. Therefore, it is likely that all groups receiving additional support will be a mix of FSM and non-FSM pupils.

Roles and responsibilities

Governing body

- The governing body will approve the overall strategy for deploying pupil premium funding prepared by the Principal.
- The governing body will hold senior and middle leaders to account for implementing the school's strategy and for evaluating its impact on the achievement of targeted pupils.
- The chair of the Finance Committee is the governor designated to ensure that the pupil premium grant is used to support the eligible pupils within the context of this policy.

Principal and Senior Leadership Team

- At Aspire Academy the Principal retains overall responsibility for leading the pupil premium strategy.
- The Vice Principals will produce targets for reducing the gap between pupil premium pupils and their peers.
- The Vice Principals will produce termly reports for the governing body, showing the progress made by socially disadvantaged pupils and projections for each academic year.
- The Senior Leadership Team will have overall responsibility for evaluating the impact of the support programme.

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for the progress of all pupils within their subjects and will contribute to reports to the governing body through the Vice Principals.

All staff

- All staff are expected to have an in-depth knowledge of all pupils they teach and support, especially pupils with disabilities and special needs and those who qualify for additional funding through the pupil premium grant.
- Teachers and Co-Educators are responsible for the progress made by all pupils
- All staff will give pupils clear feedback that helps them to improve their work.

Evaluation Impact

The implementation of the improvement strategy will be monitored and evaluated against the following success criteria:

Short term

- The school will have an effective strategy for supporting pupil premium pupils and there will be a strong commitment to this strategy by all stakeholders.
- Resources will have been purchased and appointments made so that actions in the SDP are being implemented.

Medium term

- As a result of an effective teaching and learning strategy "Co-Education" and CPD programme the skills and expertise of all staff are being enhanced.

- Evaluation through scrutiny of pupils' work and observations show that a higher proportion of teaching learning strategies are producing faster progress for all pupils. Discussions with pupils and surveys provide evidence of increased confidence and aspirations, greater involvement in learning and better understanding of how to achieve targets.

Long term

Successive cohorts and individuals will meet and exceed their targets and this will result in narrowing the gap between pupils benefitting from pupil premium funding and their peers:

- the progress gap – socially disadvantaged pupils will make accelerated progress in comparison with other pupils
- the attainment gap – accelerated progress will result in closing the gap in grades/levels.