

Pupil Premium Review

MOORFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



<https://www.moorfieldprimary.org.uk/>

Review carried out by
Lee Ashton, March 2019



PUPIL PREMIUM REVIEW

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Reasons for the Pupil Premium Review

The school was inspected by OFSTED in June 2018. The final report included several references to disadvantaged pupils, including:

- In recent years, disadvantaged pupils have not performed as well as others nationally at the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- Senior leaders have a secure awareness of the challenges and barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils face. However, in the past the funding to support this group of pupils has not always been used to good effect. The school's own assessment information shows that this trend is beginning to reverse. However, it is not happening quickly enough.
- Governors have a secure awareness of how the money to support disadvantaged pupils...is spent.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at Moorfield Community Primary School is more than double the national average. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils performed as well as others nationally at the end of key stage 1 in mathematics. The picture is not quite so rosy with regard to reading and writing. As a result of low numbers at the end of key stage 2, a comparison with other pupils nationally is not statistically viable. The school's own assessment information shows that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across the school are showing signs of improvement. However, they are not as rapid as they could be.

Comments on the performance of disadvantaged EYFS pupils was also made within the published report:

- Published data shows that in 2017 the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was 79%, which is well above the national average of 71%. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving a good level of development was also above the national average. This represents good progress from children's starting points. Children's learning journeys, the school's own assessment information, show that children, including those who are disadvantaged, are making strong gains in their learning.

Although there were many encouraging comments made in the Report about the current work of the school in relation to its disadvantaged pupils, a request for a Pupil Premium spend review would have been made to help ascertain whether these changes were the correct ones and that they were having the necessary long-term impact.

Information about the Review

The review was carried out by Lee Ashton on 13th March 2019. Mr Ashton has been a local authority teaching and learning consultant and has also been Headteacher/Executive Headteacher of several Salford schools. Choosing to work in areas of high deprivation, Lee has helped previous schools he has led win both regional and national Pupil Premium awards. In 2017 he was invited to talk to lead members of Salford council's Audit & Scrutiny Committee on the effective use of the Pupil Premium Grant.

Evidence Used

During the pupil premium review day a number of evidence sources were consulted including:

- Interviews with the Headteacher and a representative of the Governing Board,
- staff questionnaires,
- a learning walk around the school,
- scrutiny of school documents including tracking data, Pupil Premium spending plans, end of Key Stage results and other impact reports,
- reference to the school's pupil premium page on its website,
- the published June 2018 OFSTED report.

The Findings of the Pupil Premium Review

- Previous Pupil Premium Strategy Statement/Spending Plans have not been as tight or as focussed as they could have been. Examples of some of the plans written by previous Headteachers of the school appear to contain errors. Prior to the appointment of the current Headteacher, it appears that no impact reports on the effectiveness of the use of the pupil premium had been completed or published on the main school website. This made it very difficult for stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's pupil premium strategy. The school now knows that it must effectively evaluate all aspects of its pupil premium work if its disadvantaged pupils are to make any substantial and sustained improvements.
- During the review the school was able to demonstrate how it was improving the provision for disadvantaged pupils and how it was using new systems and procedures to help track and monitor disadvantaged progress and performance. The school has enhanced its current tracking system to help create progress stories for pupils and for all year groups. These documents clearly identify pupils who are in receipt of the pupil premium grant and disadvantaged groups are now discussed as part of one to one pupil progress meetings with teachers. During these pupil progress meetings teachers and senior leaders meet to discuss individual progress and attainment. Actions for pupils are identified and agreed, however, the actions for disadvantaged pupils do not always directly link back to the school's pupil premium spending strategy. This means that new projects linked to the school's disadvantaged pupils are not always captured within published pupil premium documents and therefore do not reflect the full scope of the work being covered in the school.
- Interviews with the Headteacher and a representative of the Governing Board suggested that previously only the most senior leaders of the school were aware of the pupil premium. This was also confirmed by the findings of a short questionnaire given to a small selection of teaching staff. It is apparent that this position has now changed and that increasing numbers of the school community are more aware of what the pupil premium is being spent on and who it is

to benefit¹. The school does however need to ensure that the pupil premium spending strategy is shared regularly with all staff in order to keep the document updated and relevant. It is also important to make sure that all staff know why these projects have been identified and in order to give staff a wider view of this work outside of their own classroom.

- Changes to how the pupil premium spending strategy is written are now taking place. During the review it was noted that more accurate costings were being recorded on the strategy document, including more realistic staffing costs. In the past some staffing costs had been totally funded by the pupil premium grant, however these members of staff did not work exclusively with those pupils in receipt of the funding, nor was it clear what number of disadvantaged pupils they would be working with. The costings were also often rounded, losing valuable pounds which could be spent elsewhere. The current spending plan now indicates whether a full or partial staffing cost will be taken from the pupil premium allocation and it also explicitly records how much time will be dedicated exclusively to disadvantaged pupils. This is encouraging as this way of budgeting allows more money to be spent on other projects. The school does admit however that it is proving difficult to accurately enforce and monitor this time directive due to timetabling complexities, hence further work and focus will be needed here. Caution needs to be taken when writing new strategy statements as the current one does have a reference to a writing analysis from 2016, suggesting that some identified projects may be used again the next year.
- Both previous and current pupil premium spending plans identify internal and external barriers to future attainment, however further scrutiny of the documents appear to suggest that these barriers do not change from year to year. As there was a larger than average increase in the percentage of disadvantaged pupils between 2017 and 2018² it is important that the school looks again at the children on its roll and evaluates whether these barriers are sufficient and accurate. Although not an exhaustive list, other barriers to consider include the levels of engagement from parents, the health and welfare

¹ Of the staff polled, 100% stated that they were now more aware of the pupil premium and its use. All staff polled could correctly identify some aspects of the work covered by the PPG and state how much money the school received under this grant and how many children were in receipt of this.

² Inspection Data Summary Report, Jan 2019 pg 3

of the pupils and the level of aspiration shown by the pupil and their family.

- The Pupil Premium Strategy Statement includes the headings 'Chosen action/approach' and 'what is the evidence and rationale for this choice?' These are both very effective titles, however on occasions the evidence/rationale section is not personalised to the school enough. Some rationales rely heavily on references to external research and reports. The spending strategy does not state how many of the school's pupils this affects or even if these issues are present within the school. The spending strategy also fails to highlight the year groups where there is a higher level of disadvantage. In 2018, the percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals was 80% in Year 4 and 88% in Year 6 – which was considerably higher than the rest of the year groups on roll³, nevertheless there did not appear to be any specific references to year 4 or year 6 within the document. Instead, the terms used were quite broad and spoke of all pupils. Sometimes key year groups or even small groups of key pupils (eg LAC) will need to be targeted and provided for.
- The spending strategy heavily focuses on staffing costs. Nearly all of the projects listed within the plan include a reference to staffing. Although this does have impact in the short-term, some of the good work identified within the strategy is not sustainable, hence the school should consider looking at how the pupil premium grant could help support the purchase of equipment and software to help other pupils in future years. This will help ensure that some projects can continue without the need of future investment from the pupil premium grant. It must also be noted that the pupil premium spending plan does not cross reference to the school's main development/improvement plan. This is a missed opportunity.
- During the learning walk both Headteacher and Governor spoke enthusiastically about the changes being made to the school. There is a good feeling when walking around the building and change is in evidence all around you. It was palpable that provision for the disadvantaged played a key factor in these plans. The new Place2Be provision will benefit many of the disadvantaged pupils at the school, hence this is to be heavily funded by the pupil premium grant. The

³ Inspection Data Summary Report, Jan 2019

school now needs to ensure that it has the necessary plans in place to be able to measure the impact of this work if it is to accurately evaluate it for the 2018-19 pupil premium impact spending review.

- The Governor was able to talk confidently about how the current Headteacher had increased the awareness of the pupil premium to all governors and how he had begun to inform them more about the effectiveness of this work. This confirms the findings of the 2018 OFSTED inspection and should be celebrated. As the discussions progressed it became evident that more could be done to help involve the governors in the strategic process of planning and reviewing the use of the pupil premium spend. This includes inviting them to take part in the spending strategy reviews, involving them more in the pupil progress meetings and having the pupil premium as a standing item on all full governing board agendas. As a review of the use of the pupil premium was directed by OFSTED, it may also be prudent for the Headteacher to include updates about this within his termly report to governors.
- Current school performance data suggests that the gap between the performance of the disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers is diminishing. Both the Headteacher and some of the staff polled were able to identify specific year groups and specific subjects where this was more in evidence, as well as being able to state which year groups and which subjects may need more improvement or focus. This confirms the success and effectiveness of the school's current tracking and monitoring systems. Teachers have clear ownership of their class progress story and are able to quickly identify who is in receipt of the pupil premium grant due to the colour coding system used by the school. It is hoped that the school will further enhance this system to include other groups of children, including those with SEN or those who are LAC as this will highlight the pupils in school who are even more vulnerable due to them being in more than one category or group. Recently published 2018 data shows a much stronger performance picture for the school's disadvantaged pupils when compared to 2017. Figures show that end-of KS2 disadvantaged pupils did slightly better than their non-disadvantaged peers in reading, writing, maths and science. There were also more disadvantaged pupils working at greater depth in

reading, writing and maths than non-disadvantaged⁴. This helps support the argument that the school is moving in the right direction and is making better provision for its disadvantaged pupils. The school now needs to ensure that future plans help maintain and subsequently improve this position.

Summary & Conclusion

During their visit in June 2018, OFSTED made several references to the school's 2017 performance. The figures for 2017 were low and were not the results of the work of the current Headteacher or the existing Senior Leadership Team / Governing Board. Figures for 2018 are much stronger, with 69% of Year 6 pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths⁵. Year 6 disadvantaged pupils did slightly better than their non-disadvantaged peers and this should be used as evidence to support the suggestion that the school is using its pupil premium allocation effectively. The pupil premium review process has identified many changes the school has made in its use of the pupil premium grant since the Governing Board appointed the schools present Headteacher and these changes have without doubt raised the profile of the work of the Pupil Premium Strategy Statement across a range of stakeholders. Current tracking data shows diminishing gaps and suggests that with sustained effort and whole-school support, minor differences in performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils (eg in Years 2, 3 and 4 in Mathematics) will be eradicated.

Further Considerations and Recommendations

1. Consider creating two or three case studies detailing the success of disadvantaged pupils in your school. Perhaps write about a child who was targeted for pupil premium support and who made excellent progress as a result of this? Documents like this provide good evidence for the effective use of the PPG.
2. Ensure that agreed actions recorded as part of any Pupil Progress Meeting is linked to the work costed out in the school's Pupil Premium Strategy Statement. Consider inviting a Governor to be part of the

⁴ Inspection Data Summary Report, Jan 2019 pg 11

⁵ This is +4% higher than the Salford local authority average of 65% and +5% higher than the national average of 64%

Pupil Progress Meetings in order for them to get a first-hand view of the process.

3. Share the Pupil Premium Strategy Statement with all staff at a regular basis. This will help the school keep this document evaluated, on-track and relevant. It will also help raise awareness of whole-school work and remind teachers that this work goes beyond their own classroom.
4. Consider how to more effectively timetable staff who work with disadvantaged pupils. Perhaps some intervention sessions could take place outside of normal classroom hours? This will enable the school to more accurately monitor how many hours have been spent supporting a particular child or group. After-school tuition sessions are an example of this. Entry and exit point assessments also evaluate the success of this work, helping the school write its annual Pupil Premium Impact Report.
5. Review the identified barriers to learning. Are these all still relevant? Can new ones be added once an audit of the pupils on roll has taken place?
6. Ensure that the Pupil Premium Strategy Statement is fully personalised to your school. Think about the rationales used; if the school chooses to use evidence from a piece of research state how this directly links to the pupils in your school. Also try to ensure that the strategy identifies any areas of particular high need (eg a year group cohort with an exceptionally high number of disadvantaged pupils for example).
7. Consider using a small part of the pupil premium grant to purchase physical resources. This will enable some projects to continue year on year (eg purchasing 6 iPads for a maths study club or text books to support a booster class; these sessions could be run several times without any additional cost). Remember, it is for schools to decide how the Pupil Premium is spent, since they are best placed to assess what additional provision should be made for the individual pupils within their responsibility. An element of sustainability should be encouraged when writing any plans.
8. Create closer links to the School Development/Improvement Plan and the Pupil Premium Strategy Statement. These two documents should not exist in isolation. Consider simple cross referencing between them, especially if a section of the SDP/SIP is focused on improved pupil performance.
9. Add a standing item on all Governing Board agendas focused on the pupil Premium. Consider including a section on the Pupil Premium within the termly Headteacher Report to Governors.

10. Due to the high investment from the Pupil Premium Grant, ensure that there is a clear way of assessing the impact of the Place2Be project on disadvantaged pupils.
11. It is essential that the work outlined in the Pupil Premium Strategy Statement is reviewed and evaluated. This report must be published on the school's website. It is recommended that this review is compiled in the Summer term just after KS2 results have been received. This means that a new Strategy can be written in time for the new academic year and ensures no loss of learning or delay in getting project started.