



Platanos College

Identified barriers to achievement for disadvantaged pupils | Summary

A. Introduction

The school identifies the potential barriers to educational achievement by pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium. These are described below.

This is part of our strategy for the use of the Pupil Premium funds. The strategy and interventions will therefore tackle the identified barriers to ensure that we continue to extend the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

B. Identified barriers

1. EAL (English as an Additional Language) / Literacy

We have a significant proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium who are EAL pupils or pupils that require literacy catch up. This presents a barrier to pupils being able to access the curriculum and make significant progress.

To address this, pupils are assessed when they join the school so that we establish their level of need and the support and interventions that will be required.

2. Safeguarding, health and well-being

Since the start of the pandemic, it is clear that some pupils have been exposed to safeguarding situations. This presents a barrier as pupils are struggling to manage the demands of school alongside their emotions.

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3. Behaviour

Behavioural issues and behaviour for learning can also be a barrier preventing pupils from maximising their learning and making the expected progress. These can be due to a variety of internal and external factors and, in some ways, can also be linked to social and economic factors (see below). In turn, these can have an influence on disadvantaged pupils' welfare and wellbeing and inevitably impact on their learning and development.

The school recognises the potential complex interplay of underlying factors that need to be addressed to ensure that pupils are well supported and guided, and such barriers and distractions are removed or minimised.

4. Socio-economic factors

Disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds or issues can undoubtedly effect pupils' achievement, attendance and engagement with curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

These can include for example: (a) Lack of breakfast – a hindrance to pupil focus, engagement and learning, (b) school uniform, (c) engagement/attendance at additional activities and trips.

5. Attendance

There is an obvious link between poor attendance and poor educational outcomes. Poor attendance inevitably has a negative impact on pupils' learning and achievement and potentially exacerbates the disadvantage experienced by pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium.

The school addresses this by rigorous monitoring and use of appropriate interventions in order to improve attendance and improve or modify attitudes and behaviour.

Since lockdown, it has become evident that a minority of pupils have struggled to return to school on a full-time basis.

6. Achievement / Stretching and challenging of pupils (particularly most able disadvantaged)

The school recognises that the lack of challenge would also be a barrier in itself in stretching the most able disadvantaged pupils and ensuring that these pupils maximise their learning and potential. This is a barrier to pupils' educational achievement that would be expected of such a group.

Additional provision and support is put in place to ensure that the most able disadvantaged reach their full potential and make the appropriate progress from their higher starting points. Pupils' needs are catered for through careful planning and tracking of their learning and progress within the classroom and beyond.

7. SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability)

Disadvantaged backgrounds with additional SEND needs present a unique and challenging barrier to learning and achievement. The barrier to accessing the curriculum can be due to a number of factors, such as cognition, learning difficulties, behaviour, and physical impairment.

Such special needs are complex and this is unsurprisingly linked to pupil behaviour and welfare. The school recognises that such barriers listed here can overlap and influence each other. This can require specialist support as part of a structured programme and multi-faceted approach depending on needs.

8. Parental involvement

We recognise and believe that parental involvement can have a significant influence on the educational outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Where parental support is lacking, it presents an additional challenge to ensure pupils' sustained and rapid progress.

Parental involvement can of course also be influenced by family background and socio-economic factors. Parental engagement and parental education is therefore important in encouraging a cooperative approach in supporting our disadvantaged pupils.

9. Personal skills

Personal skills are an important set of skills that facilitate pupils' learning and their interactions with others in order to assist them to maximise their learning opportunities. Having a set of good personal skills enables pupils' to learn effectively with the right approach, attitude and behaviour for learning.

10. Aspirations

This is a barrier to pupils' achievement and their chances of reaching their full potential when expectations and aspirations are low. This can inevitably lower pupils' ambitions and outcomes.

11. Trauma

Post-lockdown, we have seen an increase in the number of pupils who have experienced some type of trauma as a result of the pandemic. This in turn has become a barrier for learning and pupils have struggled to manage their emotions and return to the routine of school.

12. Covid: impact on learning

As is the case nationally, many of our pupils have gaps in their learning as a result of the lockdowns. This is something that the school is working hard to address and the school is using Pupil Premium funding to target specific groups of pupils.