

North Star Community Trust Pupil Premium Strategy

The Trust's goal is to ensure that all children – including the most disadvantaged – get the educational opportunities they deserve and make the most of them. Moreover, the Trust is firmly committed to raising the achievement of disadvantaged children in each of its schools and refuses to accept that any child is ever destined to underachieve by virtue of their social circumstances.

The Trust regards raising the achievement of disadvantaged pupils as being at the very core of its moral purpose. Every person employed by the Trust has a part to play in helping disadvantaged children to achieve educational excellence, and each of us acknowledges that we are accountable for the impact of our efforts to improve outcomes and diminish gaps in achievement.

An important aspect of the Trust's efforts to raise achievement will be to ensure that Pupil Premium funding is spent in ways that have the maximum possible impact on pupil progress and learning. The Pupil Premium is additional funding from central government which is allocated to schools for the intended purpose of supporting them in their efforts to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, the overall aim being to diminish gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children both within school and nationally. Any pupil who has been eligible for Free School Meals in the past six years is eligible for the funding.

The Trust's strategic work on the Pupil premium - at both Board and school leadership level - is underpinned by the seven building blocks of success identified by the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) in its November 2015 report, Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Articulating success and good practice:

- Promoting an ethos of attainment for all pupils, rather than stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as a group with less potential to succeed;
- Having an individualised approach to addressing barriers to learning and emotional support, at an early stage, rather than providing access to generic support and focusing on pupils nearing their end-of-key-stage assessments;
- Focussing on high quality teaching first rather than on bolt-on strategies and activities outside school hours;
- Focussing on outcomes for individual pupils rather than on providing strategies;
- Deploying the best staff to support disadvantaged pupils; develop skills and roles of teachers and teaching assistants rather than using additional staff who do not know the pupils well;
- Making decisions based on data and respond to evidence, using frequent, rather than one-off assessment and decision points;
- Having clear, responsive leadership: setting ever higher aspirations and devolving responsibility for raising attainment to all staff, rather than accepting low aspirations and variable performance.

The Trust will rigorously review the learning and achievement of disadvantaged children in its schools, forensically analysing their progress and attainment. It will question and challenge schools in ways that highlight good practice in raising achievement and actual and potential underachievement. In doing so, it will look at both external and school-based data sources. The Trust recognises that disadvantaged children do not form a homogenous group, and consequently it will raise questions about the achievement of disadvantaged pupils who are more able and/or who have special educational needs or a disability. Where underachievement persists in a school, the Trust will

make arrangements for a formal Pupil Premium review to be undertaken.

The Trust acknowledges that effective governance is a crucial component of raising achievement and that it has a responsibility to ensure that Trustees and governors are properly equipped to ask searching questions about the performance of pupils who attract the Pupil Premium and are fully aware of the moral imperative of this aspect of their work.

The Trust believes that school leaders are best placed to make decisions about how pupil premium money is spent in their respective schools. However, schools will be held to account by the Trust's Board, its sub committees and their individual Local Advisory Committees (which, with a more dedicated focus, have recently replaced the traditional governing body model), for the impact of their spending. School leaders will need to be able to describe the barriers to learning which they have identified and explain why particular strategies have been chosen to address them. They will be required to report on the impact of their chosen strategies and the lessons learnt.

The Trust will facilitate school-to-school learning through its leadership and governance networks so that schools can learn what works (and what doesn't) through discussion with other schools within the Trust family. Our school leaders are also encouraged to make use of the Sutton Trust's Families of Schools database in order to identify schools with similar demographic contexts to their own.

The Trust expects school leaders to make very well informed decisions when it comes to spending pupil premium funding. The Trust expects its school leaders to be familiar with research findings such as those summarised in the Sutton Trust - Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit and Early Years Toolkit.

The Trust expects its schools to rigorously monitor and evaluate the impact of any strategies paid for out of Pupil Premium Grant funding. Where strategies are not proving effective, it is anticipated that they will be discontinued.