

Addressing disadvantage in Enfield schools



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Please note the images used in this guide are stock library images and not representative of the schools.



Introduction

I am delighted to provide an introduction to this publication sharing some of the excellent practice in our Enfield schools.

The focus on ensuring all children and young people achieve to the best of their ability and enjoy their time in school is the key driver for all staff involved in education with a constant striving to deliver the absolute best.

Schools have been open to working with Marc Rowland, a national expert on what works for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. I started working with Marc over 10 years ago in Swindon where he had a huge impact particularly in the secondary phase and really encouraged self-reflection on practice and looking at what really works in terms of practice.

The articles written here by Enfield schools exemplifies some of the excellent and impactful practice there is in the borough. The purpose of course is to share that practice across all schools with the aim of learning from each other which is often the very best CPD. This is of course, a continual journey of reflection and improvement with our best headteachers and staff constantly looking and relooking at their practice. I commend this publication to you and hope you may be able to visit these schools to see first hand their practice.

Finally, I would like to see a big thank you to all the contributors for the time in their busy schedules to write these articles – many, many thanks.”



Peter Nathan
Director of Education
People Department



Disadvantaged pupils in Enfield schools

Consolidating what we know about addressing educational disadvantage in schools.

We know that the following are keys to success for addressing educational disadvantage in schools:

- Excellent teaching and learning within a high quality, well sequenced curriculum
- Enrichment: building social inclusion and broadening vistas
- A personal development curriculum: building confidence and agency
- Wellbeing: supporting good physical and mental health

We know that there are some principles and beliefs that are really important to unite around:

- Commit to the principle that working with disadvantaged pupils is a privilege, not a problem to resolve.
- Coalesce a culture and belief that all pupils, irrespective of background or starting point, can attain well and thrive in wider school life.
- Understand low family income and its impact on opportunity, child development and health. Understand the impact of low family income on children inside school and out.
- Agree, as a school, that low family income should never be a barrier to opportunity in the classroom and wider school life. Family income should never be an obstacle to accessing all that school has to offer.
- Never lower expectations based on a family's ability or capacity to support learning. Family capacity to support a child's education should not impact on our ambitions for pupils.

- Assessment, not assumption should always be at the heart of every strategy. Providing meaningful, actionable data to teachers and curriculum/pastoral leaders is key.
- That pupils are largely consistent in their behaviours, actions and attitudes (even when their actions aren't quite in line with our expectations!). All too often, we, the adults, are the variable.
- The most effective strategies give staff the capacity, expertise, knowledge and support to help pupils to thrive. The practitioner IS the intervention.

We also know there are some presumptions to avoid:

- Presumption of language and oracy: Can pupils access the language being used? Are they getting opportunities to talk? Are they being heard?
- Presumption of background knowledge: Do pupils have the knowledge to participate in their lessons? Background knowledge leads to motivation and inclusion.



- Presumption of positive learning experiences: Do we explicitly know that pupils are experiencing success, and have positive interactions with adults and peers? Especially with interventions, talk partners?

These behaviours often well adopted in the vast majority of circumstances, but issues like leadership capacity and school stability can lead to some variability.

Evidence from Enfield Schools

This collection of writing reflects the strength of provision in Enfield schools and is part of the important process of sharing good practice across a community of schools.

Visits that I made to Enfield schools over the last three or so years focused on how they had planned, enacted and evaluated strategies to support disadvantaged pupils. Disadvantaged pupils were taken to include those eligible for the pupil premium, but the definition was not limited to those children. Individual schools were and are best placed to determine what ‘disadvantage’ might mean in the local community.

Different schools in Enfield are at variable points in their improvement cycle. I came across some exceptionally strong practice at school level with effective practice in classrooms in every school. However, there was more variability in the quality of the learning experiences of disadvantaged pupils in and across some schools. This was an issue both inside and outside of the classroom – in academic learning, enrichment, pastoral support and personal development. It’s possible to say that disadvantaged children are often more sensitive to the quality of education they receive. Addressing variability is a key priority.

Variability in leadership

In schools with stronger, more stable leadership teams, variability in the quality of provision is minimal. Issues are addressed promptly and efficiently. Leaders are experts in their field, are knowledgeable and confident. They work as a team, are positive about each other’s contributions and take prompt, effective action from discussions. They do this in a way that improves the learning experience of all children, but particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Leadership confidence, expertise and stability and capacity is fundamentally important for strong outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Leadership quality is not sufficient on its own, but it is very difficult to achieve sustained strong outcomes without it.

Community relations

Leadership stability and confidence is fundamentally important for a strong relationship with families and the local community. Executive team support was seen to be highly effective when dealing with problematical parental behaviours.

A strength-based discourse, along with perseverance and a restlessness to do the very best for families was clearly evident in some schools. But this was less well developed in others. There was a correlation between strong outcomes and positive community relationships, and a strength-based discourse about their communities.

Understanding the nuance and complexity around how disadvantage presents in particular communities is an important component for success.

One of the most consistent issues arising from my visits to Enfield schools was how to **develop a confident authentic voice for all children**. This is not about adopting a particular approach or programme. Rather, about:

- Having a consistent expectation of pupils speaking clearly and proudly
- Avoiding over praise for limited responses from pupils
- Encouraging listening as well as speaking
- Giving children discussion thinking time to develop and express their ideas.

This means that developing the **oral language of pupils** – to support academic leaning, social and emotional wellbeing, behaviour and personal development – is a priority from Early Years to KS4. This is something to unite around in all schools and practitioners at all levels.

A relentless focus on classroom practice and ensuring that families feel valued and included in the school community (whilst maintaining high expectations) is key.

My visits highlighted **some variability in how well professional learning** was enacted in the classroom. School structures, leadership approaches and staffing vary appropriately across schools according to context. There were also inconsistencies in expectations and understanding of effective, inclusive pedagogy, pastoral support, curriculum enactment. There was more variability where there were challenges around recruitment and retention of staff. **Developing middle leaders** so that they can have a focus on reducing variability in the quality of the learning for disadvantaged pupils is fundamental to an effective disadvantage strategy.

Key questions for leaders

- How am I as a leader, checking for understanding with my team?
- How am I ensuring that professional development is enacted consistently in the classroom?
- How are we ironing out variables?

Final reflections and actions

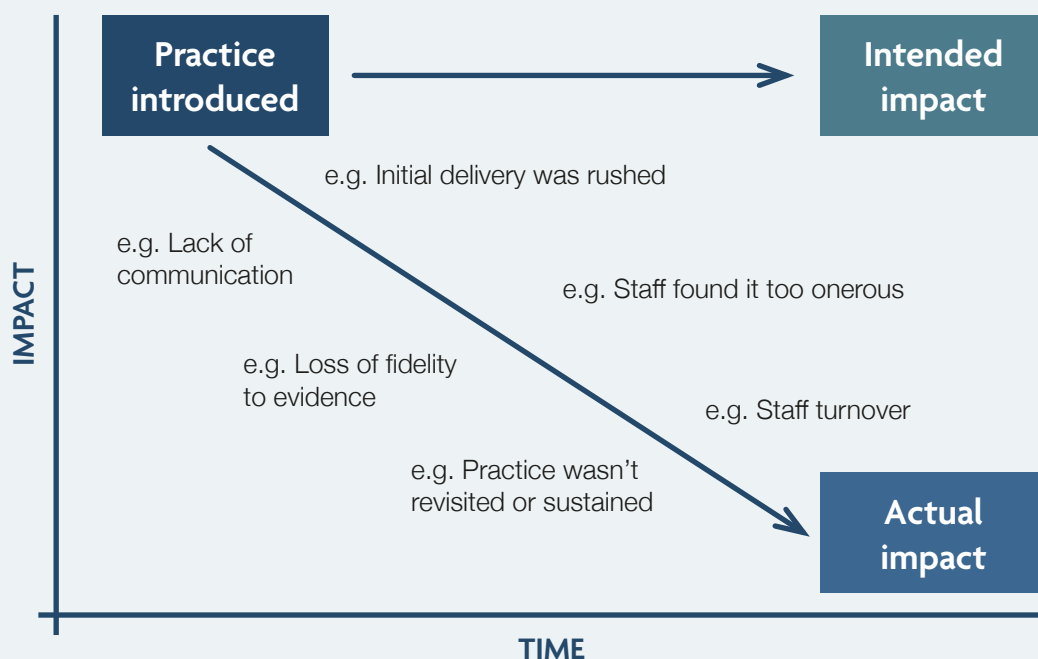
- Day to day classroom practices and day to day interactions with families are more important than any structured intervention to support disadvantaged pupils.
- ‘Walking alongside’ teachers to support them to thrive is key to success. Stability of staffing – teachers and support staff – is required to do this.
- **Implementation is key.** Without good implementation, the effectiveness of evidence-based practices can be lost.

Marc Rowland

Assistant Director Unity Research School

January 2025

Without good implementation, the effectiveness of evidence-based practices can be lost



The following **RAG rating tool** may be helpful for leaders in supporting good implementation of disadvantage strategies.

1	Hold disadvantaged pupils and families in high regard			
2	A coherent strategy that everyone drives and buys in to (including governors)			
3	Understand low family income and its impact			
4	Don't limit participation based on the ability of families to pay			
5	Don't lower expectations of pupils based on family capacity to support learning			
6	Assessment, not assumption (causes not symptoms)			
7	Removing the variables (routines, expectations, classroom practices)			
8	Developing teaching and support staff, rooted in the needs of pupils			
9	Classrooms are improving pupils as learners (front loading/oral language/self regulation/reading comprehension/AfL/feedback)			
10	Targeted academic support that is sustained in the classroom			
11	Personal development/enrichment that nurtures talent/creates opportunity for those that lack opportunity beyond school. Pupils are contributors to their community			
12	High quality pastoral care			
13	Evidence informed approaches to attendance and parental engagement			
14	Use of research evidence to inform decision making			
15	Careful implementation			
16	Dispassionate impact evaluation, leading to improved provision			

Alma Primary School

Alma is situated in Ponders End in the borough of Enfield. Ponders End has consistently been identified as having high levels of deprivation. We opened our nursery provision for 2 year olds as part of our strategy to support the work we do for our disadvantaged families.

When considering our approach, it was important to identify the barriers our pupils and families experience. These include issues such as;

- Low on-entry attainment
- Language – 82% of our pupils speak English as an additional language
- Engagement with the education system.
- Attendance
- High levels of mobility. Many of our families live in rented or temporary housing.



The expectation at Alma is that you will succeed whatever your circumstances. Staff are given time to look at data and identify successes and where interventions may need to be put in place. Our curriculum is designed to be progressive and supporting pupils to access learning opportunities and has been a focus area for training.

Engaging parents in their child's education is a key part of the ethos of our school. Parents and carers are invited into school regularly, not just in early years but throughout the key stages.

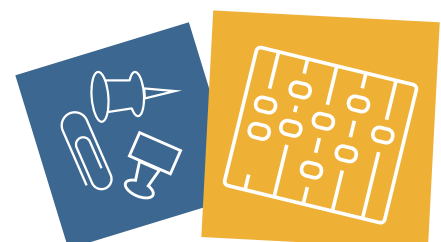
We have been running Cafes for All for a number of years in order to support our families to understand what their children are learning and to build positive relationships between school and home.

Behaviour at Alma is outstanding. We have very clear routines and expectations which ensure that our pupils feel safe and are keen to contribute in lessons. Our strong pastoral culture means that pupils respect each other and support each other to achieve.

Attendance is a priority. We work hard to engage with our families to raise the profile of good attendance and ensure that the importance of attending regularly is communicated as soon as children start with us in nursery.

What we have learnt is that there is no one answer or strategy for addressing the issues of disadvantage but it is our responsibility to consider what we do. It is therefore important to monitor and evaluate our teaching and learning so that our pupils experience high quality teaching, have the opportunity to have enriching experiences and enjoy their learning.

Helen Thomas
Headteacher



Capel Manor Primary School

Addressing Disadvantage at Capel Manor Primary School with a focus on Vocabulary and Oracy.

Context and reasons for our journey

The starting point for developing our school strategy for addressing disadvantage was a recognition of the steadily increasing levels of deprivation being experienced by members of our Capel Family. We were also seeing an increased attainment gap between our disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils which clearly reflected the well documented links between disadvantage and underachievement in the education system.

Our Commitment

Underpinning our actions was the firm belief that, with a consistent and focused school approach, we **can** change the narrative for our children. This belief was coupled with a collective commitment to ensuring that the levels of disadvantage that impact them in their primary years do not define their futures. Caring relationships, high expectations and an ethos of collective aspiration were already embedded within our school culture and would provide a firm foundation for this approach.

Assessment and Identification of Need

In order to ensure that we were effective in addressing the impact of disadvantage for our pupils at Capel, we needed to pinpoint the specific area of need that was having the most significant contributory role in their underachievement.

Ongoing self evaluation based on observation, assessment and question level analysis identified the following:

- Low attainment on entry to Reception specifically linked to language and communication

- Weak language and communication on entry across all year groups
- Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language well above national average
- A higher number of incorrect responses in reading assessments when linked to understanding of word meaning and pupils ability to summarise ideas in their own words.

Our findings reflected long-established research establishing an entirely logical correlation between disadvantage, vocabulary and achievement (*Hart and Risley, Waldfogel and Washbrook*). This provided us with a clear direction of travel.

Developing our Capel Approach

Placing vocabulary and oracy at the heart of school improvement, our disadvantaged strategy, our school curriculum and classroom practice allowed us to develop shared understanding and aspirations which, as a result, led to consistent and robust implementation.

Curriculum drivers

- Values
- Vocabulary and language
- Aspiration
- Breadth of experience

Addressing disadvantage – a four pronged approach

- Reducing financial disadvantage
- Vocabulary and language
- Curriculum engagement
- Pastoral: Relationships and emotional wellbeing (SEMH)



Excerpt from School Disadvantage Statement

Intended outcome

- Improved vocabulary and language for disadvantaged children.

Success criteria

- Observations show disadvantaged pupils increasingly using and understanding key vocabulary in their lessons. Pupils are able to use language to reason to express themselves coherently.
- Assessments show improvement in reading comprehension.
- Assessments show improved language and communication following Speech and Language intervention.

Drawing upon research and providing related training for all school staff enabled us to develop an increased depth of understanding and expertise as a professional community as well as integral collectivity in our approach.

Implementation

Implementing our strategy has been a journey of multifarious actions including:

- Self-evaluation and action planning
- Developing a leadership role specific to Vocabulary and Oracy to ensure ongoing priority, development and continuity
- Considering and discussing shared meanings and what we are trying to achieve
- Developing shared expectations and non-negotiables such as the STAR Approach whilst encouraging the individual freedom to explore the effectiveness of a range of strategies in the classroom
- Identifying prioritised tier 2 and 3 vocabulary linked to the school curriculum
- Developing pupil engagement and celebration of success
- Developing resources and prompts such as lanyards for the EYFS staff

- Developing familiarity with and cascading tried and tested learning strategies such as “Accountable Talk”
- Embedding expectations for explicit teaching of vocabulary within our reading structure
- Developing a Capel Progression document of defined year group “expectations for talk”

Monitoring implementation

Expectations for teaching and learning within the classroom are regularly shared to ensure that vocabulary and oracy remain on the agenda and are incorporated within monitoring. Every monitoring visit to the classroom is followed by a meeting with selected pupils to discuss their learning and check whether they are able to understand and articulate the learning that has taken place and are able to understand and use the key vocabulary taught.

Impact

Analysis of data so far has not only shown a positive reduction in gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in KS1 and KS2 but has also shown an impact for the attainment of all pupils.

External review has also shared that *“pupils readily engage in learning discussions using subject specific high level vocabulary with confidence. They are able to articulate the meaning of challenging words, enabling them to access difficult texts and understand vocabulary linked to subject specific areas.”* This has led to accreditation for an area of excellence in *“Enhancing pupil outcomes through effective vocabulary development”* (Challenge Partners Report 2024)

The end...Not quite!

Despite the evidence of impact that is already apparent, these are early days. Planning for sustainability and continued impact necessitates an ongoing process of self-evaluation and action planning to ensure that we are always alert and responsive to the individual as well as collective learning needs within our dynamic school community.

Marianne Enchill-Balogun
Headteacher

Galliard Primary School

Attendance is Everybody's Business.

Raising the profile of school attendance in schools is vital and everyone has an important part to play.

As school leaders we need to make sure we have the monitoring systems and procedures in place but more crucial is understanding what factors may be impacting attendance and what is within our power to address.

Tackling attendance is not straightforward. There are children in our schools who have 'broken weeks' on a regular basis to those whose families book holidays in term time. The triggers here for non-attendance are very different and require different approaches.

Developing positive relationships with parents and pupils is key. We know that every day in school counts and lessons are progressive so missing days will have an impact on a child's ability to keep up and feel that sense of achievement and success. Missing school can also reduce their access to extra curricula opportunities; taking part in the wider life of the school such as representing the school in sports teams and developing quality relationships with their peers and teachers.

We all want our children to thrive and feel successful and we can do that through giving them the sense of belonging. Children who are greeted with warmth from the moment they step through the school gate feel that sense of belonging. A teacher at the classroom door checking in on how their weekend has gone builds on this. Children know you care about them. They want to get actively involved in their learning; they want to contribute to the wider school and they are proud to be part of your school community.

Getting the tone right when children have missed school is crucial. Welcoming them back and letting them know you are pleased to see them sets a more positive tone than reminding them of all the learning that they have missed. This

is not about shame. This is about developing a consistent approach across the whole school community. Children thriving in an environment built on certainty. Everyone, taking the time to notice and value what each child brings to the class. When they are absent they are missed therefore their return is welcomed. Taking the time to notice is powerful. The child who did finally make it in before the register got a place on our 'Proud Wall'. He has not been late since! Kindness with visible consistency gets results.

We have tried most things: attendance percentages in assemblies; certificates for those with 96%+; ice-creams for 100%; attendance spotlight months; coffee mornings for parents; assemblies for children but what remains our most successful intervention is quite simple. Leaders at all levels seeing attendance as their priority. Looking at attendance through the lens of our community, sending attendance updates that are visual and accessible for all our parents to access; noticing improvements and challenging with rigour and kindness.

We know all our children deserve the best. Our teachers, our curriculum and our schools are their chance!

Caroline Clifford
Headteacher



Wilbury Primary School

The Wilbury Approach to Addressing Educational Disadvantage

Wilbury is a large three/four form entry primary school in Edmonton, North London, in an area of significant deprivation and children can start school with us from 2 years of age. We currently have 43% pupil premium pupils, 81% of our pupils speak English as an additional language and the vast majority of our children start school educationally disadvantaged, with very low-level language skills.

At Wilbury, through leadership capacity, there is a sharp focus on the quality of pupils' learning experiences. Our leadership team play a significant role in evaluating progress through ongoing, and crucially, supportive monitoring and quality assurance. They devote time to our staff for collaborative team planning, teaching, and modelling by spending time in classrooms to provide on the spot coaching, training, and immediate feedback to develop practice. All within an open and enthusiastic culture where staff at all levels support and challenge each other in a spirit of professional improvement.

At Wilbury, the practitioner is the intervention. There are no labels put on our disadvantaged pupils. We know that their progress is dependent upon the quality of staff at all levels across the school and every moment matters for our pupils.

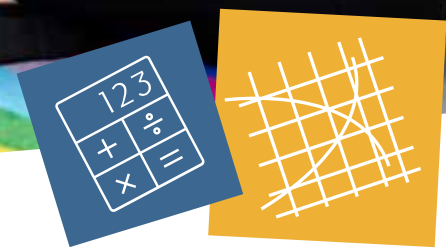
We are optimistic sceptics – we know we have our priorities right, but we also never assume and we keep banging on, day in, day out. We also have the confidence to be self-directed and say no to things that do not fit with our priorities. We focus on fewer things and doing them better.

In summary – addressing educational disadvantage is a whole school approach:

- Create a happy, open and enthusiastic positive culture, with positive, trusting and beneficial relationships, the highest expectations, urgency and leadership at all levels across the school.
- Be clear about your key whole school priorities – simple and effective and fewer things better.
- Be clear about why these are your priorities and communicate this to staff using evidence and data and by banging on.
- The core subjects, and reading and language development, are key.
- Create collective responsibility for raising standards across the school – make everyone in school feel part of this, empowered to make a positive contribution through collaborative progress meetings, PPA sessions and in strong well-led teams – staff know and feel that we are all in it together.
- Celebrate success all the time and value the contribution of staff at all levels – success breeds success and positivity breeds positivity.
- Do not focus on labels or groups – focus on improving standards for each individual child and each individual teacher and teaching assistant – the practitioner is the intervention.
- Build your leadership capacity with key 'out of class roles and leadership time' and never assume!

Lisa Wise
Headteacher





The Wilbury approach to addressing educational disadvantage – what this looks like in early years, particularly in relation to language development.

We have a large early years department at Wilbury – two year olds to Reception, with capacity for 250+ children. Our children have VERY low language levels on entry. Our approach: we have a seamless provision from TWOs to Threes to Nursery to Reception. Linked in terms of principles, ethos, practice and progressive. Balanced, combining Early Years best practice with rigorous phonics, writing and maths in Reception. A sense of urgency runs throughout and we have high expectations leading to excellent outcomes. We aim for the highest quality provision, and consistency, in terms of quality and practice, across all classes and year groups.

We know ‘the language gap is the disadvantage gap’, so developing children’s language is central to our practice and provision. We do this through language rich environments, adult-child interactions, stories, songs and rhymes and explicit teaching of vocabulary. It is very much an approach not an intervention!

Our approach is all about what happens in the classroom (and outdoors) on a daily basis and is for ALL our children. It is crucial to involve ALL staff, including support staff and adults working with our children with SEND, and ensure everyone understands what we do and why we do what we do in the way that we do. The approach is extensively researched and evidence based – the why.

We have high quality and consistent language rich environments throughout, from TWOs to Reception, inside and outdoors. For us, this means things to talk about, places to talk, for example a focus on role play and investigation areas, and crucially, adults ready to talk. Everything in our practice is carefully designed to maximise opportunities for high quality talk, for example:

- The structure of the day includes long periods of uninterrupted play so that children can become deeply involved in activities, offering opportunities for meaningful interactions.
- Careful organisation of focus activities and interventions – so that there’s always a member of staff available to interact with children in provision.

- Calm and non distracting learning environments, with low noise levels – so that children are not distracted and don't have to talk over background music.
- Ensuring all adults have an understanding of what a quality interaction looks like, and how to do it – for some this comes naturally, for others less so!
- Ensuring adults are aware of the importance of conversations in developing language (through CPD) and that we need quality interactions inside and outside – outdoors is a great context for talk.
- We emphasise the need to know your children. Staff are aware of children who have not had the benefit of lots of talk at home, and spend more time with them.

Books, stories and vocabulary are embedded in our practice. We teach key vocabulary explicitly, linked to stories and our wider curriculum, and support children in using these words in context. We send key vocabulary home to parents, with definitions and videos of the story, to further embed the vocabulary at home. We prioritise and give extra time to children who have had less experience of books, stories, vocabulary at home and we provide 'build up' experiences so ALL children can access the books.



We have the same sense of urgency as the rest of the school, and we make the most of every minute. In early years this means interacting with children 100% of the time, capitalising on teachable moments, being fully prepared and more.

Keeping it simple, fewer things better – we are self directed. We choose interventions carefully, and timetable them carefully, so that adults and children aren't pulled away from provision, for example one to one phonics tuition happens during registration. It's all about the approach, not interventions – the practitioner is the intervention! We do fewer things in terms of interventions, but we do them well.

We invest in high quality CPD for all staff at all levels, for example, our ongoing bespoke partnership with Early Excellence. The focus of this is always on our priorities – language development through adult-child interactions and learning environments.

Culture (and keeping it going!) – the Head of Department/phase leader role is key. This involves:

- **Banging on** – revisiting vision, expectations and the why regularly
- **Relentless** focus on quality of provision
- **Relationships** and valuing EVERYONE
- **Open culture** – in and out of classrooms all the time
- **Celebrating** good practice and skills sharing. Giving specific and public praise
- Picking up on weaker practice and **intervening immediately**, providing support where needed
- **Positivity** (even when you don't feel it!)
- Bang on, but **never assume!**

Sophie Chaloner

Deputy Headteacher and Early Years Lead –
Wilbury Primary School

Early Years Lead – Children First Academy Trust



Woodpecker Hall Academy

Woodpecker Hall Academy is a happy and vibrant three/four form entry primary school in Edmonton, North London.

We have a committed staff and brilliant team of children who are focused on addressing educational disadvantage, securing positive outcomes and preparing our young learners for the future. We are very proud of our achievements so far but we are always striving to do more for our children and community. Our staff moto is “changing the world, one child and family at a time”.

Woodpecker Hall Context

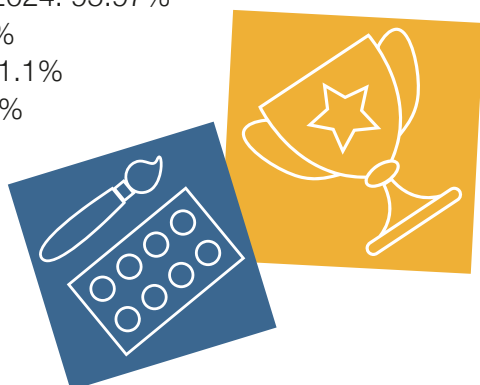
Our school lies in an area of high deprivation, with many families having no recourse to public funds. Our children and families live in difficult circumstances, deprivation and have complex home situations. However, we have worked hard to overcome barriers and create a safe, happy school that lies at the heart of the community.

Statistical Data (Current)

- Total on Role (including YN): 774
- Pupil Premium: 35%
- LAC/PLAC: 0.25%
- Ethnicity Groups: 63
- Number of Spoken Languages: 46
- EAL: 65%
- SEND: 17%
- EHCP: 5%

Overall Attendance

- 2023-2024: 95.97%
- A: 2.9%
- Unau: 1.1%
- PA: 10%



Community, Education, Opportunity

At North Star Academy Trust all schools focus on these three areas in order to address some of the issues surrounding educational disadvantage. By focusing on the community, quality of education and providing children with a wide range of rich and diverse opportunities we have been able to support, grow and nurture children, parents and families.

Key Strategies that Work

Community

- Employ an outreach team
- Deliver training and courses to get parents into employment
- ESOL classes
- Run baby clinic with the NHS
- Stay and play sessions for under 2s
- Weekly foodbank
- Hardship fund for families in crisis

Education

- No excuse culture and holding us all to account for progress and outcomes
- Raised expectations with teachers, children and parents
- Focus on quality of teaching, learning and outcomes
- Improved pupil behaviour for learning
- Focus on personal development and being the best version of yourself
- Slimmed down the number of interventions – focus on reading
- Review every child’s progress and next steps half termly
- Support lower attaining children from YR-Y6 through a range of strategies:
 - SEND classes
 - Targeted accelerated learning classes
 - Weekend learning groups
 - Easter school
 - Free breakfast and afterschool learning clubs

Opportunity

- Educational visits every half term (planned across the school and areas of the curriculum)
- Employed PE, Music and Spanish teachers and deliver a range of extra-curricular activities
- Wide range of after school extra-curricular activities-based on pupil voice
- Identifying talents and skills and offer opportunities within school or signposting locally
- Free places for breakfast clubs and after school clubs
- Free tuition for targeted pupils
- Employ a play therapist and learning mentor and offer weekly support for children in need
- Central Safeguarding team who work alongside school DSL to support families in need

Impact

Through our work in school over the last few years, we have seen a marked improvement in children's behaviour for learning, children's confidence and their ability to stand up for what's right and wrong. Children have a powerful voice and they are a Force for Positive Change.

We have also seen improved outcomes and progress at all key stages but especially by the end of Key Stage 2. Woodpecker has gone from being in the lowest 20% of schools for progress in the country to one of the top 10% for progress. (See table below).



Within the wider community the reputation of the school has greatly improved, and we now have a growing nursery provision providing childcare from the age of two.

Even Better Ifs

We are still working hard to reach some of our parent community to help them engage further in their children's learning and the wider life of the school. This is a focus in our school development plan for the next few years.

Nicky Ross

Headteacher – Woodpecker Hall Academy
North Star Community Trust Leader of Primary Education

KS2 Outcomes	Progress KS2				Attainment KS2			Attainment Targets
	2019	2022	2023		2019	2022	2023	2024
Reading	-4.02	1.1	+5.6	62/11	71/31	80/46	91/36	85/50
Writing	-5.8	-1.3	+6.1	71/0	58/11	78/31	85/40	85/40
Maths	-5.1	0.1	+4.3	62/9	67/18	79/27	88/32	85/40
Combined				45/0	54/6	71/14	82/40	83/30
Science					61	78	85	85

Enfield County School for Girls

“Onward Ever” Respect, Responsibility, Equality of Opportunity, Co-operation, Generosity of Spirit.

ECSfG focus on and work with our disadvantaged Student

Marc Rowland visited our school and met with members of our leadership team.

We focused some discussion around our Pupil premium strategy statement which led to further development.

‘Addressing Educational Disadvantage in Schools and Colleges: The Essex Way’ (edited by Marc Rowland) – I purchased a copy of this for each member of SLT and it became a reference point in our discussion and instrumental in my decision to simplify our SIP into a three tiered approach.

This ensured that school improvement discussion maintained a collective focus/ awareness of our disadvantaged students.



Enfield County School for Girls School Improvement Plan

2024-2025 Whole School Priorities

These priorities work in conjunction with each other to implement, develop, embed and sustain whole school practice with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion central to continued school improvement.

1. Teaching
ATTAINMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistent application of our Teaching and Learning Framework – GREAT Practice and ‘Classroom and Corridor Culture’• Consistent application of E-TIPPS (Enfield Trauma Informed Practice in Schools and Settings)
2. Targeted Academic Support
ATTAINMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closing the Gaps – focus on Educational Disadvantage, Global majority and EAL outcomes
3. Wider Strategies
ATTAINMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance• Curriculum and School Experience Enrichment
STUDENT VOICE AND LEADERSHIP IS INCORPORATED INTO AND SUPPORTS ALL WHOLE SCHOOL PRIORITIES





Tiered Support Focus 2024-2025

This identified priority works in conjunction with others to implement, develop, embed and sustain whole school practice with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion central to continued school improvement.

School Improvement Priority Actions

Closing the Gaps – focus on Educational Disadvantage, Global majority and EAL outcomes.

Rationale for this strategy

- The recognition that strategically focused interventions outside of the class room are central and impactful to student progress and outcomes.

What we want the outcome to be

- All of our students to make good or better than progress, reflected in end of year and examination outcomes

Planning and Implementation

Targeted Academic Support

Key Stage 4 and 5 (prioritise consistency in approach):

- To maximise the % 5 GCSEs grades 9-5, % 5 GCSEs 9-7 grades and % Grade B/ Merit and above at L3 through robust monitoring of key pupil groups (HPA, MPA, LPA, PP, EAL, SEND and ethnicity groups).
- SSM and ELL guides middle leaders to take strategic and timely action in response to data drops. Students at risk of underachievement are planned for and receive targeted intervention.
- Year 11 and 13 students can access a comprehensive programme of interventions at lunch, afterschool, Easter holidays and Saturday mornings.
- Attendance of interventions is tracked centrally through **'Arbor Interventions'** to ensure attendance of key groups and create a provision map (PP, EAL, SEND, Global majority).

- PiXL strategies are used to inform raising attainment strategy for both Key Stages – introduce to KS3 (NCR).
- CLs are accountable via tight line management and Raising Achievement meetings.
- Termly CORE meetings with PALS, Core CLs and SENCo to ensure joined up approach to raising attainment.

Key Stage 3

- Embed new levelling/ grading system to ensure a consistent approach to assessment and reporting across all subjects.
- NCR to guide middle leaders to take strategic and timely action in response to data drops. Students at risk of underachievement are planned for and receive targeted intervention.
- Attendance of Core subject interventions/ homework club is tracked centrally through **'Arbor Interventions'** to ensure attendance of key groups and create a provision map (PP, EAL, SEND, Global majority).
- Termly CORE meetings with PALS, Core CLs and SENCo to ensure joined up approach to raising attainment.
- CLs are accountable via tight line management.

Wider Strategies

Attendance

- Attainment data and analysis shared with PALs. Core meetings ensure students with low attainment, low attendance are receiving appropriate pastoral support to re-engage with school.

What have we done especially for our disadvantaged students?

It is quite difficult for me to articulate specific interventions for disadvantaged students because our work has really been focused on ensuring that opportunities available for students are accessed **by all students and that our expectations of students are our expectations of all students.**

Every school is unique with its own context and challenges but for us it really was a case of expecting the same from all students whilst being mindful of potential areas that we might need to level up and address when/if they arose.

Some strategies that we implemented for all students

- Created an ethos whereby 'every student CAN achieve' by closely tracking all students and plugging gaps with interventions where needed.
- All students have access to Core interventions in Form time, options subject interventions in lunchtime and all subjects after school.
- Attendance to interventions is subtly targeted.
- Disadvantaged students only were given our SRC (study and resource centre) to provide a quiet study space for the entirety of the 6 week public exam period.
- Revision guides, exam resources, pencil cases were provided for all disadvantaged students (financial support)

Jennie Gumbrell
Headteacher



Highlands School

In December 2024 Unity research school, led by Marc Rowland, published a paper stating that addressing educational disadvantage meant understanding the impact of low family income on pupils.

The paper shows that pupils who thrive in our schools tend to have high levels of:

- Financial stability
- Social confidence
- Enrichment and background knowledge

Highlands School, a comprehensive school in North London with over 1,650 students on roll, strives to ensure an equitable experience for all its students. Over 18% of our students are pupil premium and 76 of our pupils have an EHCP. This paper shows the strategies in place and how they are anchored in the research-driven categories outlined above.

Financial stability

Financial stability creates opportunity and choice. Low family income can limit those opportunities. Our disadvantaged pupils don't lack talent or ability, but they can lack opportunity. Highlands attempts to be a financial leveller for its students by ensuring the following are in place:

- A hardship fund accessible to families who require immediate financial support for clothing/food items
- A funding pledge to any family unable to pay contributions towards school trips or excursions
- Financial support for any family unable to afford school equipment, revision guides or lesson materials
- Financial support for instrumental lessons and tuition

Social confidence

A sense of social confidence is fostered through positive engagement in experiences. Schools provide a wealth of opportunities for interaction but evidence shows that pupils from low income families are less likely to participate even when funded. At Highlands, students have the opportunity to experience positive interactions throughout the day and across our extensive, inclusive co-curricular programme. We work exceptionally hard to ensure that our disadvantaged students fully participate in these opportunities. Below are some of the strategies we have in place to do this:

- Universal, co-curricular provision including DARE days (4 days of trips every year) for all year groups, Ed extra (compulsory music sport and STEAM enrichment) for year 7 and 8, culture days, a rigorous PSHE and RSE programme, assemblies, work experience, career interviews, access to an extensive alumni, and one to one careers advice. The school believes trips, visits and activities are right, not a privilege.



- A house system for all students which offers a range of leadership opportunities.
- A range of musical activities and an annual theatre production.
- A centralised and systematic approach to tracking and monitoring which ensures all disadvantaged students are accounted for and represented proportionally in the enrichment provision listed above.

Enrichment and background knowledge

All pupils come to school with life experiences, however it is in the gift of schools to ensure provision secures equity for those who for whatever reason have had fewer, or more limited experiences. Good enrichment, defined by Unity research school, as that which creates opportunity, broadens horizons, builds confidence, promotes social inclusion and belonging, is crucial to secure equity. At Highlands we have built an enrichment programme beyond the classroom which positively influences learning in the classroom. It does this by bringing learning ‘to life’ and providing valuable pre-requisite knowledge which helps students from all backgrounds access and ‘go beyond’ the national curriculum.

- Our DARE days are carefully sequenced so that they support classroom learning. For example year 7 students visited the Globe theatre which supports their Shakespeare unit; year 8 students visit the Victoria and Albert museum, which supports their renaissance art unit and year 9 visit St Albans Cathedral which helps develop their responses to the enquiry question ‘is there one truth or many’. Students appreciate the opportunities offered to them via the DARE day programme. 77.1% of students in year 7 recorded that they ‘really enjoyed’ DARE days.
- Reading is prioritised at Highlands in order to ensure that all students can access the curriculum, and are able to read for pleasure. Highlands School’s reading strategy is ambitious for all students. In tutor time each week year 7 to 11 students have high quality literature read to them. Students report that they ‘like’ this reading programme. Lexia intervention is put in place for all students in years 7, 8 and 9 identified as reading at a



level below that expected for their age. The impact of this provision is striking. In year 9 for example, students made an average of two years and five month’s worth of progress over the course of eight months. SEN students in years 7 to 9 made an average of one year and two month’s worth of progress in the course of eight months.

- Our knowledge rich curriculum is designed to expose students to ‘the best of what is thought and said. Knowledge is carefully sequenced so that it builds on prior learning and is codified in booklets. Retrieval practice, in place to help students recall prerequisite knowledge, is embedded into every lesson.

Examination outcomes are a measure of performance, not of learning. Directly attributing outcomes therefore to one or all of these strategies would not be appropriate. However, our 23/24 results show an improving story. Our P8 disadvantage gap at KS4 has narrowed by 0.3. The percentage of disadvantaged KS4 students continuing their studies at Highlands sixth form has remained steady at approximately 30-40% over the past four years. However in 2023-24 80% of the school’s disadvantaged cohort applied to study at Highland’s sixth form. Of the five students who have gone from Highlands to Oxbridge in recent years, two were pupil premium. We are confident that our holistic school wide approach to addressing disadvantage is bearing fruit in their final results.

Mia Lloyd
Deputy Headteacher

Kingsmead School

The Kingsmead Readiness Curriculum: Opportunities for disadvantaged children to belong, discover themselves, and make thoughtful plans for their place in society.

School leaders have to think about the experience of a disadvantaged child holistically. No one programme is going to be sufficient in ensuring that they are successful. At Kingsmead we do this in deliberately designing the experience of the child across the academic, behavioural and wider learning. The school needs to be led so that these things are done in a way that is sustainable and long-term in its thinking. This is not just about this year, it is about deepening and strengthening a community institution.

In the last few years the way we run the school has been overhauled to try to do this, but for the purposes of this document, we have chosen one small part of that to discuss: our readiness curriculum.

We believe a school cannot simply be a place where students arrive, learn subjects, and leave. For education to be truly transformational – especially for disadvantaged children – it must prepare them for the world beyond the classroom in a structured, deliberate, and ambitious way.

Various sources discuss the importance of these elements of school life, both as an end unto themselves, but also as a way of ensuring that those children least confident in school feel part of something that is growing them as a person, they engage with school life and feel equipped to transition to the next stage. These issues are particularly significant in the post-pandemic years.

In the past at Kingsmead these things were siloed and ad hoc, highly dependent on the personal interests of those leading them. They were an afterthought, and the lovely things that happened may have been celebrated, but they may also have dissolved suddenly. They were fabulous for the children involved, but those children tended to be the ones who were always

going to be involved. They were absolutely not a deliberate strategy to challenge disadvantage.

That is the purpose of our Readiness Curriculum: to ensure that every child, regardless of background, experiences a rich, broad education that equips them not only with knowledge but with the habits, skills, and confidence to navigate life successfully.

We have deliberately designed and structured this experience thoughtfully. It includes overlapping and integrated approaches to:

- Transition at each key stage.
- Learning together with tutors about the world and adult life.
- A rolling cycle of high-quality clubs that reflect student interests.
- Varied, focused and deliberately planned careers activities.
- Trips that consolidate the academic curriculum and extend school life.
- Students gaining awareness of their own progress in these areas and how to account for it.

Beyond academic success, children need access to a clear, planned wider provision that guarantees every child's entitlement. This is not just about enrichment for the sake of it but about equity – ensuring that no child misses out on opportunities because of their background, home circumstances, or financial barriers.

At its heart, this curriculum guarantees powerful transitions at each Key Stage, ensuring that students move smoothly through the different phases of their education without gaps or uncertainty. For those who lack the social capital to bridge these moments naturally, we do not leave it to chance. Instead, we create structure and clarity so that every child knows what is expected and how to succeed. We worked closely with the Mayor's Office to develop a 'Stepping Stones' program that ensures the children identified from primary schools are well understood and have a comprehensive support

program, both in the summer and throughout Year 7. We spend a lot of time and energy with the children through the process of choosing their next steps and use our Drop Down Days to facilitate it.

Alongside their curriculum, students engage in learning with tutors about the world and adult life, structured discussions that develop their understanding of society, responsibility, and self-efficacy. This happens in a way that is preplanned, thematic and spirals upward from Y7 to Y13. Each term, assemblies, reading books in tutorial, drop down days and character curriculum (PSHE) are all integrated and consolidate one another. This programme also overlaps with the themes of the texts that children read together with their tutor as part of our literacy program.

One of the most radical and important shifts we made was restructuring the school day to ensure that extra-curricular opportunities are embedded within teachers' directed time. This means that our after-school clubs – on average 60+ running at any one time – are not an optional extra for those who can afford them but an integrated part of the school experience, free of charge and accessible to all. Teachers shape the clubs, responding to both their own expertise and the interests of the students, creating a rolling cycle of high-quality opportunities that reflect student passions. This not only benefits students but also fosters a culture where staff and students share experiences beyond the formal curriculum, deepening relationships and reinforcing a sense of belonging. In the last two years these changes have embedded, and we now have above 80% of our children in Year 7 and Year 8 engaged in clubs and activities that are completely free to them and available to all. For those unable to stay after school (young carers, those travelling longer distances) we have created various challenges for them to complete independently.

One of the greatest sources of inequity in schools can be access to meaningful trips. As a school we are aware of this and our trips – as they are in a lot of schools – are deliberately organised and scheduled to ensure that there is a basic and meaningful entitlement. For instance, every child in Year 7 will visit a cultural institution on a drop down day, every child should have a residential

trip in Key Stage 3 and ideally every child will have a trip abroad in their time at Kingsmead. Every child will also visit a university twice in their time at school. There remains space for the ad hoc trips and opportunities, but the preplanned, curricular nature of the others is key.

We also know that disadvantaged children are least likely to have structured exposure to the world of work, which is why we insist on varied, focused, and deliberately planned careers activities. These are not vague aspirations but carefully mapped experiences that allow students to see a tangible future for themselves and understand the steps to get there. Similarly, trips that consolidate the academic curriculum while extending school life ensure that all students, regardless of family circumstances, have access to the cultural capital that others might take for granted.

Finally, students need to be engaged in metacognitive self-reflection so they are aware of and feel proud of their personal growth. This is why we are now embedding regular reflection and retargeting in students' personal 'passports' – a system that ensures they are conscious of their development, setting goals and tracking their own progress. It reinforces the idea that their journey is not something that happens to them but something they actively shape.

For disadvantaged students, these structures are not just important; they are essential. The gaps that exist in experience, opportunity, and aspiration cannot be closed by good teaching alone. They require a deliberate, whole-school strategy that systematically dismantles barriers, making what was once inaccessible an entitlement for all. The Readiness Curriculum ensures that no child has to rely on luck to be well-prepared for the future. Instead, they leave us knowing that they belong in the world, equipped with the skills and experiences to thrive within it.

David Medway
Headteacher



Laurel Park School

Context

Laurel Park School is a small school with the following context:

- 42% Pupil Premium
- 13.4% SEND
- 61% EAL

Alongside this we have a number of students who are vulnerable because of contextual safeguarding. Therefore, our moral compass as a school is to ensure that our strategies are school wide to support staff and students to secure outcomes for young people. Our students have one chance at education, so we have a relentless drive of self-evaluation and review to ensure that we do the best by our students every day.

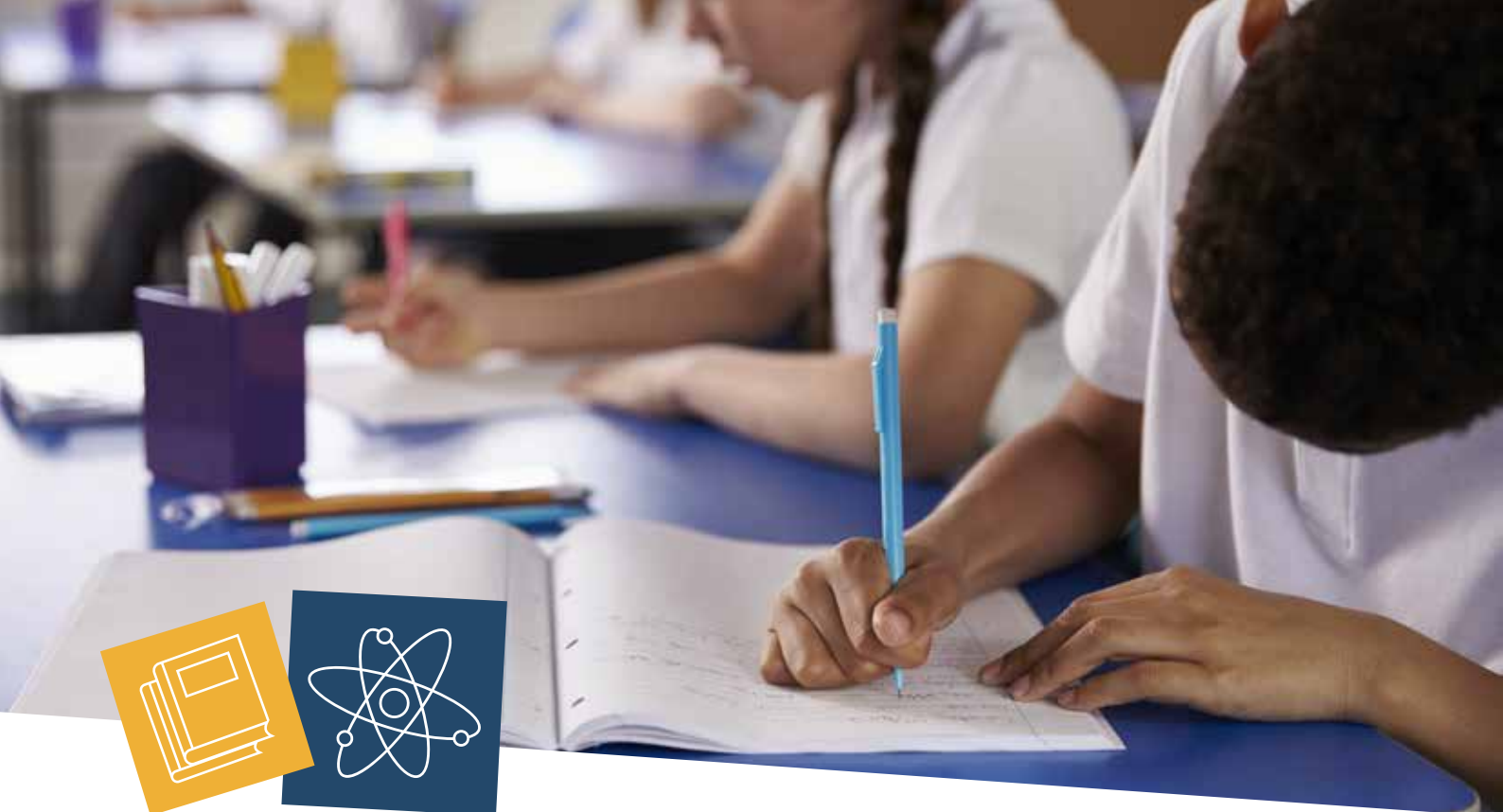
Strategy – School wide systems

These are the following school wide systems we put in place:

- Tutor Time Reading programme – every morning 30 minutes. Form tutors read to their students. Last year the theme was diversity, this year students are reading classic texts. Year 11 use the time for their form tutors to read the set texts for English literature to them.
- Trips for all programme. Each year group has a termly trip. This is for the whole year group not just a selected few or those who can pay first. These are mapped out at start of the year with monthly payments for parents and subsidised where needed.
- Character lessons for all as a designated part of the school curriculum, alongside the Skills Builder Programme, where students work towards Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. The aim is to develop the softer skills such as oracy, listening, group work and critical thinking in order to develop self-esteem and confidence a gap we identified post-covid.
- We enter all sports fixtures and have some borough champions.

- All of KS3 are ‘theatre goers’. We have a commitment to arts education and each year group across 7-9 visits the theatre once a year.
- Structured careers programme for everyone alongside Gatsby benchmarks. All students in years 9 and 11 have a 1:1 careers meeting.
- Roll call and line ups and structured behaviour routines and expectations supported by Doug Lemov’s Teach Like a Champion, means that students have consistency and routines.
- We teach behaviour systematically in the same way we teach maths and English, and we revisit this on a regular basis.
- Self-Quizzing as the homework model for all KS3 to remove the barrier of digital device requirement and to develop long term knowledge retention.
- Built in capacity in the senior team to do cover so that external supply is minimised.





School wide reward and recognition

- Character points and reward system – counted each week and logged into our system. We have recently introduced the Golden Ticket which comes with a number of benefits.
- Laurus Nobilis Awards – A yearly celebration evening where students are rewarded for our school values.
- Headteacher Awards and commendations for staff and students.
- Clear behaviour policy.
- AQA unit award scheme used across the school to build and develop self-esteem.
- Leadership roles for students and giving back to the community: The LPS Clean-up Crew are a self-appointed team who help and serve in the canteen
- Badges that we make ourselves and use to reward students.
- Social media group – our students manage our social media, capture things, edit reels and pass to us for posting on our various feeds.
- Year 11 PP students have 1:1 mentors to guide them through their journey.

Impact so far

- Complete change of culture, we have created a sense of belonging for our young people. No-one goes unnoticed and everyone is involved.
- Results 2024 show that our PP students had the most improved outcomes when compared to other cohorts. There is still significant work to do, however the gap closed significantly in all headline measures.
- Improvement in attendance compared to the previous year with a PA reduction of 7.1%.
- Calm classrooms that are on the whole disruption free.
- Improved attitudes of young people who have the ambition to do well.
- Students are reading, some are on book number 5!
- Students reporting more issues showing that they feel safe to report.
- Community narrative about the school is changing.

Adele Christofi
Headteacher

Enfield Virtual School

Virtual School interventions to improve the outcomes of Looked After Children using the Pupil Premium Grant.

Enfield Virtual School has utilised the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) to improve the educational outcomes of Looked After Children and close any learning gaps. Using the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Guide to the Pupil Premium, alongside their research and case studies, we have developed a range of strategies and interventions to help improve the outcomes of our pupils. Enfield Virtual School carefully audit all requests for PPG through the children's termly Personal Education Plans (PEPs); we use the National Association of Virtual Schools research to help determine which interventions are going to make the biggest possible difference for our children. On top of individual requests through the PEPs, we also offer our children one to one tuition, including reading recovery and numicon; training for schools on reciprocal reading and philosophy for children; therapeutic mentoring and access to Easter and Summer schools.

All unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UAS) are assessed by the Virtual School and bespoke ESOL tuition is put in place to enhance oral and literacy competency as well as providing cultural capital experiences and opportunities. Additionally, ESOL Easter and Summer Schools are provided to UAS children to improve outcomes for all.

Enfield Virtual School acts as the integrated vehicle between education and social care, bringing in a "systems wisdom" so barriers to improving the education outcomes are removed and learning gaps are closed. We provide regular training to all Enfield Social Workers, Designated Teachers for Looked After Children, Designated Safeguarding Leads and Foster Carers in Trauma Informed Practices.

The Enfield Virtual School has been innovative in using the Pupil Premium Grant to engage a Speech and Language Therapist and Educational Psychologist as part of the Virtual School. Research highlights that disproportionately high number of children looked after have speech and language communications, (Cross 1999, 2001). National research data indicates 16% of looked after children have speech and language difficulties, however, a recent study of care leavers (Legg et al 2021) indicated that 60% of this group met the criteria for a language disorder with literacy difficulties. As a result of this the Virtual School has purchased a tool to screen every secondary-aged Looked After Children for Speech and Language in schools in Enfield.

The Speech and Language Therapist provides continued professional development (CPD) annually to our Designated Teachers to train them on how to use the speech and language tool effectively. Enfield Virtual School request that every Enfield Looked After Child is screened if they haven't been as part of their Education Health and Care Plan. We have screened 81% of all Looked After Children and 76% have been identified as having speech, language, or communication needs. The results are sent to the Virtual School Speech and Language Therapist





who supports the school to put in the correct intervention programme along with additional half termly surgery slots for schools to give both advice and support. In addition, foster carers have received training on understanding speech, language and communication needs and in using strategies to support a child's understanding and use of language.

Enfield Virtual School utilises the pupil premium grant to improve the outcomes for reception aged children for them to achieve their early learning goals. Enfield Virtual School arrange Ready to Enjoy School and Learn courses for foster carers. The aim of the course is to support the foster carers in further understanding and acquiring a range of skills to support the child's development and learning. This course is run by the Virtual School Educational Psychologist and Speech and Language Therapist.

Our strategic use of the Pupil Premium through our Looked After Children's PEPs was highlighted in our most recent Ofsted inspection. The HMI Education Inspector said, "The Virtual School provides a highly effective service for children in care. Leaders know individual pupils

and schools very well. The quality of personal education plans ensures that education support meets the needs of most children. Many initiatives are in place for children, including tuition and timely therapeutic services, which have a measurable positive input on children's progress and attainment, attendance, and emotional health" (Ofsted July 2024).

Suzanne Rowson

Head of Corporate Parenting and Headteacher of the Virtual School, HEART CAMHS Manager, CIN Educational Lead

