

**Raising achievement and closing the gap:
Improving the life chances of disadvantaged
young people in Warwickshire**

**A pupil premium action planning toolkit for
Warwickshire schools
written by
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“We aim to raise the attainment of disadvantaged children and young people in Warwickshire through high quality teaching and meeting individual need”

1. Introduction

Since 2011, the pupil premium in England has put additional funding directly into school budgets to address the needs of disadvantaged learners. Previous funding boosts, such as excellence in cities and the London Challenge, were directed at disadvantaged areas. However, a majority of disadvantaged young people do not live in deprived areas, so it is welcome that pupil premium funding in England and Wales is allocated to schools and early years settings for every disadvantaged learner.

This has shone a particularly strong light on the performance of disadvantaged learners in rural and suburban areas. It has provided a big challenge in areas where the attainment of disadvantaged learners is low.

The picture of school achievement by different groups has changed markedly over the last 30 years. While Asian 16 year olds did badly in 1970, Chinese, Indian and Bangladeshi children born in 1997-98 did better than any other group. The attainment of White British students has fallen from above average to well below average since 1970, providing a particular challenge in areas where there is a higher proportion of White British pupils than average.

Disadvantaged children fall behind their peers from a very young age, so tackling the attainment gap in the early years is critical to success later on.

There are few areas of provision in which schools have as much autonomy as the decision on how to spend the pupil premium. The government gives schools the additional funding and holds them to account for the impact they make with this money on the attainment and progress of these learners. Whether a school has five or 500 learners eligible for the pupil premium, the same degree of autonomy and accountability applies. What schools do with the money is entirely up to them, but they are held to account for the outcomes.

The purpose of this action planning toolkit is to enable schools to work in groups, based on teaching schools or multi-academy trusts (MATs), or individually, providing them with the information on which to make their use of pupil premium more effective and increase its impact on the attainment and progress of disadvantaged learners.

Attainment of 11 year olds in SATs and 16 year olds in GCSE varies very considerably across the country.

Gap and disadvantaged attainment at 11, 2017

	Gap at 11	PP/NPP		Gap at 11	PP/NPP
Birmingham	16	49 / 65	Stoke	15	48 / 63
Coventry	17	48 / 65	Walsall	25	39 / 64
Dudley	27	38 / 63	Warwks	26	42 / 68
Sandwell	15	49 / 64	Wolverhampton	18	50 / 68
Solihull	21	49 / 70	Worcester	26	38 / 64
Staffs	21	48 / 69	National	20	48 / 68

Percentage of 11 year olds reaching expected standard (PP / Non-PP)

Gap and disadvantaged attainment at 16, 2017

	Gap at 16	PP/NPP		Gap at 16	PP/NPP
Birmingham	-0.33	-0.18 / 0.15	Stoke	-0.45	-0.38 / 0.07
Coventry	-0.45	-0.43 / 0.02	Walsall	-0.61	-0.62 / -0.01
Dudley	-0.54	-0.51 / 0.03	Warwks	-0.62	-0.45 / 0.17
Sandwell	-0.37	-0.39 / -0.02	Wolverhampton	-0.48	-0.34 / 0.14
Solihull	-0.56	-0.55 / 0.01	Worcester	-0.62	-0.52 / 0.10
Staffs	-0.51	-0.53 / -0.02	National	-0.51	-0.40 / 0.11

Average Progress 8 score (PP and Non-PP)

2. The building blocks of success

National reviews of successful practice with pupil premium have produced considerable evidence of what works best. While schools have autonomy over how they spend the pupil premium on specific interventions, the following 'building blocks of success' should be in place in all schools:

School culture

- An **ethos of attainment** for all pupils
- An unerring **focus on high quality teaching**
- **Clear, responsive leadership**, with high aspirations and expectations
- **100 per cent buy-in from all staff**, with all staff conveying positive and aspirational messages to disadvantaged pupils
- **Evidence (especially the EEF Toolkit) is used** to decide on which strategies are likely to be most effective in overcoming the barriers to learning of disadvantaged pupils. Particular consideration is given to high-impact, low-cost strategies.
- Able to demonstrate positive **impact** of all strategies
- **In-depth training for all staff** on chosen strategies
- Every effort is made to **engage parents/ carers** in the education and progress of their child

Individual support

- Identification of the main **barriers to learning** for disadvantaged pupils
- **Individualised approach** to addressing barriers to learning and emotional support
- **Focus on outcomes** for all individual pupils
- **Frequent monitoring** of the progress of every disadvantaged pupil
- When a pupil's progress slows, **interventions** are put in place rapidly
- Teachers know **which pupils are eligible** for pupil premium
- The needs are recognised of disadvantaged children in **specific groups**, e.g. high ability pupils, looked-after children

School organisation

- **Deployment of the best staff** to support disadvantaged pupils – developing the skills of existing teachers and TAs
- Excellent collection, analysis and use of **data** relating to individual pupils and groups
- **Performance management** is used to reinforce the importance of this agenda
- **Effectiveness of teaching assistants** is evaluated and, if necessary, improved through training and improved deployment
- **Governors** are trained on pupil premium
- **Pupil premium funding is ring-fenced** to spend on the target group
- **Effectiveness of interventions is evaluated frequently** and adjustments made as necessary
- A **senior leader has oversight** of how PP funding is being spent

At a minimum, this should be used by school leadership teams, staff and governing bodies as a checklist of practice in each school. Where an item is considered not to be in place effectively in the school, prompt action should be taken.

This checklist of successful practice in the use of the pupil premium draws together the conclusions from three published reports in England:

- Ofsted has produced three reports on pupil premium and the second of these, published in 2013, followed a survey of schools and contains a useful list of successful, and less successful, approaches to the use of the funding.¹
- A report from the National Foundation for Education Research in 2015 surveyed the use of the pupil premium in a range of schools.²
- At the end of two years as national pupil premium champion in August 2015, I wrote a blog post summarising the lessons learned during that time about the most successful strategies and interventions being used by schools.³

¹ Ofsted report on pupil premium, 2013: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-pupil-premium-how-schools-are-spending-the-funding-successfully>

² NFER report, July 2015: www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PUPP01

³ <https://johndunfordconsulting.co.uk/blog/>, August 2015

3. Identifying the barriers to learning

The starting point for developing a strategy for spending PP funding must be a careful examination of the barriers to learning of PP-eligible pupils.

The reason for having a disadvantage funding stream that is targeted at individuals is that there is no typical disadvantaged child. Each pupil has individual circumstances, which create particular barriers to learning that need different strategies.

“There is no such thing as a typical disadvantaged child.”

“Individual needs must be researched and addressed.”

It is worth spending some time investigating the barriers to learning of individual pupils, so that their needs can be addressed in a more targeted way. This can be done through:

- listening to the pupil voice;
- shadowing one or more disadvantaged learners for a day;
- data analysis on progress and attendance;
- learning walks; and
- talking to parents, staff and governors.

Some of the following barriers to learning are likely to emerge from such an investigation:

- Lack of support at home
- Low value placed on education by the family
- Lack of engagement of parents/carers with educational progress of their children
- Low aspirations and low expectations, on the part of the family, the learners themselves and, most critical of all to address, members of staff of the school
- Lack of awareness of education, training and employment opportunities
- Limited opportunities outside school, leading to a narrower range of experiences
- Lack of self-confidence and self-esteem
- Poor social and other skills
- Mental and physical health issues, often undiagnosed
- Poor nutrition
- Lack of sleep
- Limited vocabulary
- No support with reading at home and lack of access to books
- Poor attendance
- Poor teaching

There are many more barriers to learning that could be added to this list for some children. There will be other children who are from low socio-economic homes, but who have very supportive families with strong aspirations for their children, who are healthy and have a good diet. One cannot generalise, so the emphasis must be on meeting the needs of individual disadvantaged learners.

4. Desired outcomes and success criteria

As with all school policies where funding is being spent, it is important for school leaders to decide, in consultation with staff, governors, parents and learners, on the objectives of their pupil premium expenditure.

Having identified the barriers to learning of their disadvantaged pupils, school leaders and governors can set out what they hope to achieve in helping learners to overcome these barriers. For pupil premium spending, the desired outcomes might be as follows:

Desired outcomes
Improving attainment of disadvantaged learners
Reducing gaps <ol style="list-style-type: none">Within-school gapGap between disadvantaged learners in school and non-disadvantaged nationally
Improving attendance
Accelerating progress
Reducing exclusions
Improving behaviour
Improving engagement of families
Developing skills and personal qualities
Extending opportunities
Improving transition between phases of education

Good destination data

This is not intended to be a definitive list. Some schools will delete items inappropriate for them; other schools will want to add other desired outcomes.

Success criteria and accountability

It is not sufficient for school leaders to set out the aims of the school for its disadvantaged learners. For each of these desired outcomes, it is also important to define what success looks like, in order to be able to evaluate policies and know whether they are achieving what the school intends. These success criteria can be put into a second column on the table, as follows:

Desired outcomes	Success criteria
Improving attainment of disadvantaged learners	Improve attainment of disadvantaged learners from x% in 2018 to y% in 2019 to z% in 2020
<p>Reducing gaps</p> <p>a. Within-school gap</p> <p>b. Gap between disadvantaged learners in school and non-disadvantaged nationally</p>	
Improving attendance	
Accelerating progress	Every disadvantaged learner makes at least good progress every half-term
Reducing exclusions	
Improving behaviour	
Improving engagement of families	
Developing skills and personal qualities	
Extending opportunities	On the school's list of opportunities, increase the number accessed by disadvantaged learners from x to y
Improving transition between phases of education	Statistics generated by surveys of pupils and parents in years 6, 7 and 8 reveal an improving picture
Good destination data	<p>a. Increase the number of PP learners gaining places at Russell Gp universities from p to q</p> <p>b. No PP learners becoming NEET in the year after leaving school</p>

I have inserted five examples of possible success criteria and how they might be defined, but every school will have its own success criteria. These success criteria are not being set for the school by the local authority, the government or Ofsted; they are decided and monitored by the school itself. In other words, school leaders are taking ownership of accountability for their success in improving the life chances of disadvantaged learners.

Turning around the lives of disadvantaged children is an important part of the moral purpose of schooling. So, along with the success criteria and the statistics, it is good practice to write up some cases studies of individual children, explaining how the pupil premium has been used to improve their readiness for learning and their life chances. If a case study can be completely anonymised, it can be put on the school's website as part of the pupil premium report; if not, the case study can be kept in the school's own accountability file. Either way, it speaks volumes about the ethos of the school.

Only when the barriers to learning have been thoroughly investigated, desired outcomes set out and success criteria agreed, is the school in a position to decide what strategies to use in order to achieve the success criteria.

5. Choosing the optimum strategies

Nationally, schools are now targeting their pupil premium funding more clearly, using evidence to select the most effective strategies. Thus, support for literacy or maths is better focused and is often done by qualified teachers or highly trained teaching assistants; tracking of progress is directed particularly strongly at disadvantaged pupils, with data monitored frequently and rapid interventions made where required; social and emotional support is given where needed; additional activities are subsidised, in a way that is well targeted at raising attainment; funding is spent on ways of improving attendance; and the specific needs of individual learners are analysed and met.

Schools have immense autonomy in how they spend the pupil premium and some have been extremely creative in their use of the funding. For example,

1. The national winner of the pupil premium awards in 2015, the Ark Charter Academy in Portsmouth, had an acute problem of attendance among its disadvantaged students. It introduced several strategies to improve attendance, including the leasing of a minibus to go around the area and collect absentees.
2. Some schools keep back a proportion of the pupil premium grant and invite staff to bid for this money for projects to help disadvantaged learners.
3. Staff in some schools have agreed that, when they mark a set of exercise books, they will mark the books of pupil premium learners first.
4. Many schools have used the funding to lease musical instruments and pay for music tuition for disadvantaged learners. For example, drums were the chosen instrument for a boy in South Gloucestershire, who reported that this had improved his co-ordination and hence his handwriting.
5. A primary school in the north-east pays for every disadvantaged learner to attend the theatre every year.
6. Using pupil premium funding to respond to individual need, such as: weight watchers classes for an obese child; a wig for a girl with alopecia; expenses associated with being members of the sea scouts, boy scouts, girl guides and the Duke of Edinburgh award.
7. Many schools pay for free breakfasts for disadvantaged learners; some invite the parents of these children to have a free breakfast with them and use the opportunity for informal conversation about progress.

One of the barriers to learning of many disadvantaged learners is the narrowness of their experience outside school and the lack of opportunities they have to gain experiences that their more fortunate peers take for granted – going to the theatre, visiting the seaside, holidaying abroad, or spending a day in the countryside. The narrowness of their lives can be a major barrier to their education and their ambition.

The narrowness of their cultural experience also has a huge impact on their vocabulary, which in turn impacts on their progress in reading comprehension. An inner-city Manchester primary school, with a high percentage of disadvantaged learners, has established an innovative programme of planned visits, linked to texts and carefully planned vocabulary learning, from early years through to age 11. It includes a journey on a bus into central Manchester, a local walk to learn the vocabulary of street furniture, visits to farms, a zoo and the beach.

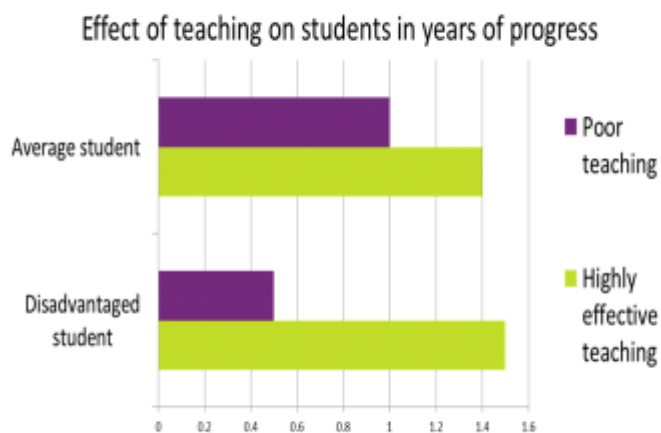
The National Trust has a list of *50 things to do before you are 11¾* and it is highly likely that, if schools use this as a survey of their 11 year olds, the disadvantaged children will have done fewer of the activities than their better-off peers. However, this is a list of rural activities – dam a stream, camp out in the wild, make a home for a wild animal – that aims to get children out into the countryside, which is only part of what schools want to do to broaden the experience of disadvantaged children. Many schools have used the principle behind the National Trust list, but have produced their own list of 30, 40 or 50 activities and have then set out to give the pupils the opportunities to do these things, targeting the activities at specific learning objectives.

While an innovative approach to the use of the pupil premium is good, there is no substitute for using evidence of what works in deciding how to spend the additional funding.

6. The evidence of what works

Section 2 above on the '*Building blocks of success*' offers a useful checklist of evidence of policies and practices in schools that are successful with the pupil premium in raising the attainment of disadvantaged learners.

All three of the sources used in constructing the above list include the quality of teaching as a significant factor. School leaders will find it useful to draw on evidence for this, which can be found in a Sutton Trust report of 2011⁴ and is illustrated in the diagram below.



Source: Sutton Trust (2011)

Poor teaching hampers the progress of disadvantaged students, on average, by six months per year, disproportionately holding back these learners, and is therefore a major contributory factor in the gap that exists between the attainment of disadvantaged learners and others.

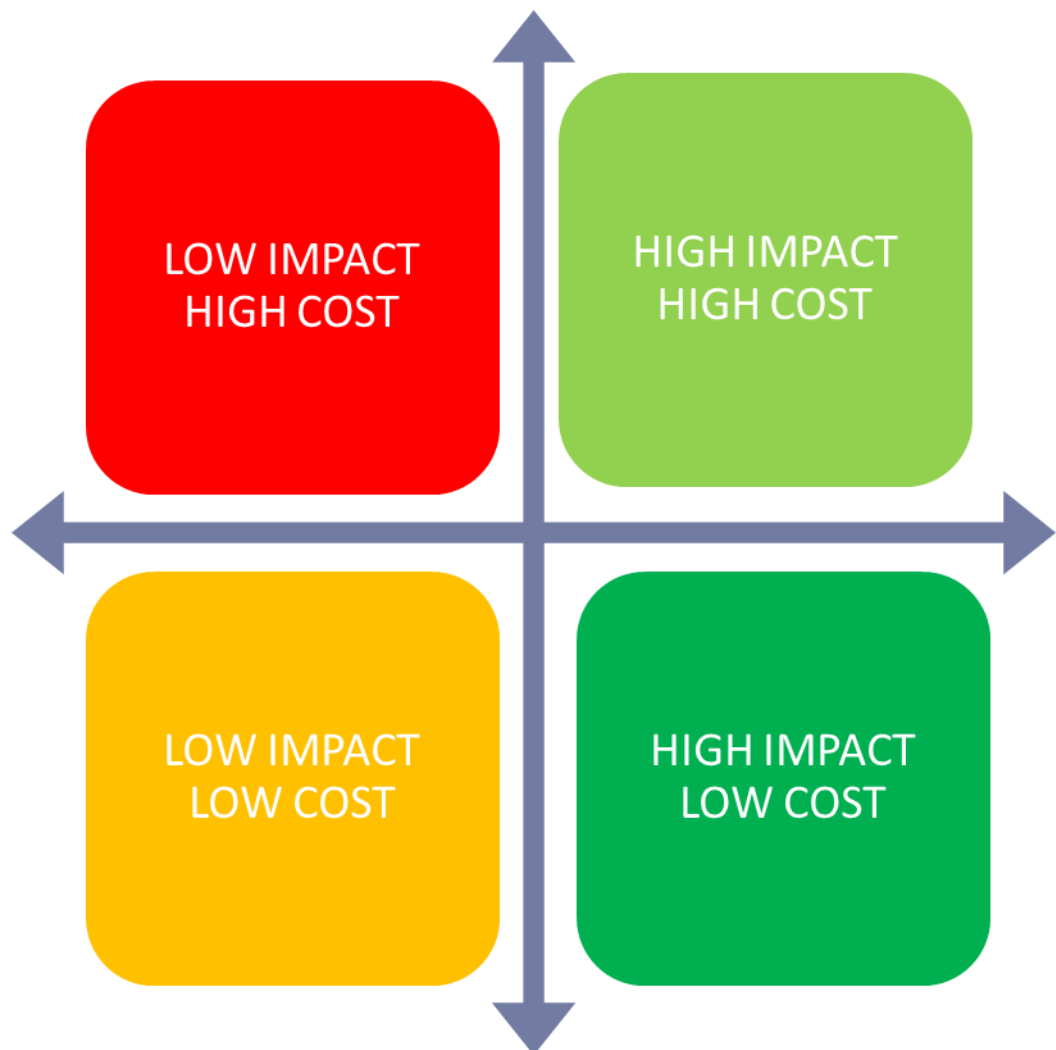
Fortunately, the evidence also shows that excellent teaching disproportionately helps disadvantaged learners.

The elimination of poor teaching and the provision of excellent teaching for disadvantaged students are therefore vitally important components of the pupil premium strategy of all schools. Since raising the quality of teaching both increases attainment and helps to close the gap, it is legitimate to spend pupil premium funding on improving teaching quality.

Disadvantage funding offers an excellent opportunity for school leaders to use published evidence on strategies for supporting disadvantaged learners, since this evidence is readily available to teachers. Used in conjunction with the *Building Blocks of Success* above, these

⁴ *Improving the impact of teachers on pupil achievement in the UK*, Sutton Trust, 2011
<http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/2teachers-impact-report-final.pdf>

sources can be used to find high-impact low-cost strategies that will maximise the benefit of the pupil premium.



The Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit

First, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) toolkit⁵, which is based on an analysis by Durham University of 10,000 research projects worldwide, is an accessible database that summarises the effectiveness of 30 or so strategies. For each strategy there is an estimate of the relative cost of implementation, a grade according to the depth of research evidence, and a figure for the likely months of impact on pupil progress. Behind each strategy is a page summarising how to implement the intervention successfully, recent studies on the topic, the likely costs per learner of implementation, related research projects, and what school leaders need to consider if they decide to adopt the strategy.

The EEF toolkit is an excellent place to seek evidence of high-impact, low-cost strategies and to decide which of these might best meet the needs of an individual school.

⁵ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit/>

Teaching & Learning Toolkit

An accessible summary of educational research on teaching 5-16 year olds.

Toolkit Filter

Toolkit Strand ^ Cost v Evidence Strength v Months Impact v

Filter results by keywords

£ Cost
Evidence
+1 Months Impact

Reset

Intervention	Cost	Evidence Strength	Months Impact
Arts participation Low impact for low cost, based on moderate evidence.	£ £ £ £ £	🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒	+2
Aspiration interventions Very low or no impact for moderate cost based on very limited evidence.	£ £ £ £ £	🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒	0
Behaviour interventions Evidence suggests that behaviour interventions can produce large improvements in academic performance	£ £ £ £ £	🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒	+4
Block scheduling Very low or no impact for very low or no cost, based on limited evidence.	£ £ £ £ £	🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒	0
Collaborative learning Moderate impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.	£ £ £ £ £	🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒	+5
Digital technology Moderate impact for moderate cost, based on extensive evidence.	£ £ £ £ £	🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒 🔒	+4

The EEF website has a parallel early years toolkit, which provides evidence for the most effective use of the early years pupil premium.⁶

The EEF website also has useful research reports and guidance reports⁷, which discuss how schools can best adopt recommended strategies. A good example is the report on *Metacognition and Self-regulated Learning*, published in April 2018.⁸

For school leaders who wish to carry out research, there is no better opportunity than to participate in an EEF research project on a specific aspect of their work with disadvantaged learners, usually through randomized control trials.

Pupil premium strategies in successful schools

The second source of evidence on successful practice is to seek out what is working well in schools that have been successful in raising the attainment of disadvantaged learners and closing the gap.

Each year since 2013, the DfE has made regional and national awards for work with the pupil premium. The pupil premium awards website⁹ lists all the winners and includes some case studies.

Every school in England is statutorily obliged to have a pupil premium section on its website and this provides a wealth of evidence for schools investigating excellent practice. The

⁶ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/early-years-toolkit/>

⁷ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/>

⁸ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/metacognition-and-self-regulated-learning/>

⁹ <http://www.pupilpremiumawards.co.uk/>

websites of the schools that have won pupil premium awards make a good starting point for this search.

In addition, the EEF Families of Schools database¹⁰ provides data on every school in comparison with the 50 schools that most closely resemble it in socio-economic composition. This is an easily accessible way to see how the school is doing with disadvantaged pupils, in comparison with similar schools elsewhere. The most successful schools in the family can be identified and their websites studied for evidence of good practice with the pupil premium.

The Families of Schools Database



Marc Rowland of the National Education Trust has visited over 200 primary, special and secondary schools, looking at their pupil premium practice and conducting reviews, and his practical guide is a useful resource of good practice across the country in a wide range of types of school.¹¹

Teaching assistants

Many schools spend a considerable amount of pupil premium funding on teaching assistants. It is extremely important that this money is being spent effectively and efficiently.

The quality of the work of teaching assistants is more important than the quantity. All schools should have rigorous ways of evaluating the effectiveness and impact of teaching assistants.

The **Deployment and Impact of Support Staff** (DISS) project¹² provides important evidence of why, in some schools, teaching assistants are not having a positive impact on the progress and attainment of pupils.

¹⁰ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/families-of-schools-database>

¹¹ Marc Rowland, *An updated practical guide to the pupil premium*, John Catt Publications, second edition, 2015

¹² http://fdslive.oup.com/www.oup.com/oxed/primary/literacy/osi_teaching_assistants_report_web.pdf?region=uk

The EEF report on **Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants**¹³ is a brief summary of the research evidence on good practice in this field.

The EEF has produced a free online course containing many examples of good practice in the deployment of teaching assistants.¹⁴ Alongside the course, there is a free pack of resources, including:

- a list of six TA-led projects that have shown a marked positive impact on pupil's learning;
- the EEF guidance report on making best use of TAs;
- an online audit tool, Red/Amber/Green (RAG) self-assessment, an 'interventions health-check', and a suggested change process.

The work of the MITA (Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants) group should also be accessed, both on the website and in book form.¹⁵

¹³ http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/uploads/pdf/TA_Guidance_Report_Interactive.pdf (March 2015)

¹⁴ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/making-best-use-of-teaching-assistants/ta-online-course/>

¹⁵ The MITA website: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/resources/making-best-use-of-teaching-assistants/ta-online-course/> The book by Anthony Russell, Rob Webster and Peter Blatchford: *Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants* (Routledge)

7. High-impact low-cost strategies¹⁶

Nearly a third of schools are using pupil premium to plug the holes in their budget, according to a Sutton Trust survey of teachers in April 2017. In 32 per cent of primary schools and 27 per cent of secondary schools the reduction in the school's funding is being mitigated by spending some of the pupil premium on items that would previously have been paid for through the main budget.

This is bad news for the disadvantaged pupils in those schools, who are not benefitting from the additional spending. It is bad news for schools, too.

These schools are playing a very risky game in allocating pupil premium money to areas that will not affect how well their disadvantaged children do. Impact may well be reduced and accountability will tell the story very publicly.

In these circumstances, the government may conclude that, if schools do not spend the money on disadvantaged pupils, the funding will in future come with strings attached and schools will lose the autonomy on pupil premium spending that is the envy of schools in many other countries.

The government's 2019 Spending Review is not far away and, if the pupil premium is to continue after 2020, the school system will need to be able to justify the £12 billion or so spent on pupil premium since 2011. We must be able to demonstrate how much it has helped to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap with their better-off peers. Spending the pupil premium on other things and not improving the lot of disadvantaged young people are the quickest ways to losing the extra funding from 2020 onwards.

Most importantly, depriving disadvantaged pupils of their entitlement goes against the values of equity and fairness to which most schools subscribe. Doing extra for disadvantaged pupils and thus, at least to some extent, levelling the playing field of their lives in comparison with their fortunate peers is a key part of the moral purpose of teaching.

None of this is to deny the enormous funding problems faced by schools. But high impact interventions to help disadvantaged pupils overcome the barriers to learning they face do not have to be expensive.

At a time of stretched budgets, school leaders and governors should be looking – in places like the Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit – at the high-impact, low-cost strategies that are shown by evidence to make the biggest impact.

¹⁶ This section is adapted from the author's TES blog on 20 April 2017: <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-views/25-low-cost-ways-maximise-pupil-premium-spending>

In addition to the Toolkit, national reviews of successful practice with pupil premium have produced considerable evidence of what works best.

Here are 25 low-cost ways to spend the pupil premium and make the maximum impact:

1. Create and maintain an ethos of attainment for all pupils - high aspirations and expectations for all
2. Maintain an unerring focus on high quality teaching
3. Have 100 per cent buy-in from all staff, with all staff conveying positive and aspirational messages to disadvantaged pupils
4. Identify the main barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils
5. Frequently monitor the progress of every disadvantaged pupil
6. When a pupil's progress slows, put interventions in place rapidly
7. Deploy the best staff to support disadvantaged pupils – developing the skills of existing teachers and teaching assistants
8. Collect, analyse and use data relating to individual pupils and groups
9. Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching assistants and, if necessary, improve this through training and better deployment
10. Use evidence (especially the Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit) to decide on which strategies are likely to be most effective in overcoming the barriers to learning of disadvantaged pupils. High-impact, low-cost strategies include the following seven EEF Toolkit strands:
 11. Feedback
 12. Meta-cognition
 13. Mastery learning
 14. Reading comprehension
 15. Collaborative learning
 16. Oral language interventions
 17. Peer tutoring
 18. Replace some 1:1 support with small group work
 19. Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and make adjustments as necessary
 20. Agree among the staff that when they mark a set of books, they mark the books of disadvantaged pupils first
 21. Provide in-depth training for all staff on chosen strategies
 22. Ensure that all teachers know which pupils are eligible for pupil premium
 23. Use performance management to reinforce the importance of pupil premium impact
 24. Train governors on pupil premium
 25. Have a senior leader in charge of pupil premium spending and impact

Adopting some of these high-impact, low-cost strategies will maintain the momentum of school improvement during the funding squeeze and make a big difference where it matters most.

8. Evaluating pupil premium strategies

External pupil premium reviews on a school can be ordered by Ofsted after an inspection, but more commonly external reviews are commissioned by the school itself. Many schools have already commissioned external reviews and much useful information has been gathered from these.

External pupil premium reviews normally follow the methodology in the Teaching Schools Council guide, a third edition of which was published in 2018¹⁷

This guide has been written in a way that the methodology can be used for both external and internal reviews, as it is important for schools to keep pupil premium spending constantly under review.

If any pupil premium strategy is not delivering its intended impact, it should be dropped immediately and the funding spent on something that the available evidence suggests is likely to be more effective.

¹⁷ *Effective pupil premium reviews*, Teaching Schools Council, 2018
<https://www.tscouncil.org.uk/resources/guide-to-effective-pupil-premium-review/>

9. The role of governors on pupil premium

It is essential that school leaders involve governors in decisions about pupil premium expenditure and keep them informed about progress towards the success criteria that they will have agreed.

The reason for this is straightforward: raising attainment of disadvantaged learners and closing the gap should be key parts of the school development plan, which is agreed and owned by the governing body.

Knowing what questions to ask the head and senior staff is important for governors. In order to make their decisions about pupil premium effectively and fulfil their accountability function, governors need to be fully informed about pupil premium and related policies, and may well want to ask the headteacher questions such as these:

- How many pupils are eligible for pupil premium?
- How much additional funding does the school receive?
- How is this funding allocated?
- How is the school evaluating the impact it is making with the funding?
- What progress is being made each term by disadvantaged learners? How does this compare with progress made by other pupils?
- How is the school improving the engagement of the parents of disadvantaged learners?
- What interventions are helping bright disadvantaged children to achieve their potential?
- What interventions are helping looked-after children to raise their attainment?

At the end of the year,

- On all measures, what was the attainment of pupils eligible for pupil premium, compared with the attainment of other pupils?
- How does the school's pupil premium data compare with national data for non-pupil premium students?

10. Reporting impact

All schools are statutorily obliged to report to parents on the impact of pupil premium funding and the ways in which this is being used to overcome the barriers to learning of disadvantaged learners.¹⁸

For the current academic year, the school website must include:

- the pupil premium grant allocation amount
- a summary of the main barriers to educational achievement faced by eligible pupils at the school
- how the pupil premium is being spent to address those barriers and the reasons for that approach
- how the impact of the pupil premium is being measured
- the date of the next review of the school's pupil premium strategy

For the previous academic year, the school website must include:

- how the pupil premium allocation was spent
- the impact of the expenditure on eligible and other pupils

In addition to a description of the school's use of the pupil premium, it is good practice to set out clearly in tabular form, how the pupil premium is being spent and evaluated and what is the impact of each strategy. This can be done in the following way:

	Person responsible	Cost	Evaluation	Impact
Improve feedback				
1:1 tuition				
Attendance officer				
Peer tutoring				
etc				

A more detailed website report can be made using the template in the Teaching Schools Council paper mentioned in the previous section.¹⁹

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online>

¹⁹ <https://www.tscouncil.org.uk/resources/guide-to-effective-pupil-premium-review/>

11. Ofsted and the pupil premium²⁰

Inspection focus

Inspection focuses strongly on disadvantaged pupils and, in particular, on the most-able disadvantaged pupils. It is very unlikely that a school will be given a Good rating if provision and outcomes for these groups are not good.

The inspection handbook states that inspectors will gather evidence about the use of the pupil premium in relation to:

- the progress made by disadvantaged pupils from their starting points, especially the most able, at the end of each key stage, against other pupils nationally. They will consider the extent to which differences in their attainment and progress are diminishing
- how pupil premium funding has been spent, the rationale and impact on current pupils across the school, including in the early years.

The pupil premium statement requirements on the school website are as follows:

- Pupil premium allocation for the current academic year
- A summary of the main barriers faced by eligible pupils
- Details of how the school intends to spend the allocation and reasons
- How impact will be measured
- The date of the next review of the pupil premium strategy
- Details of how the school spent the previous academic year's allocation
- The impact of the funding on disadvantaged pupils

Ofsted has no preferred style for schools to report pupil premium information on their websites, but the published PP report on the school website must contain the information as set out in the DfE guidance.

Report templates are available on the internet from the Teaching Schools Council, National College for Teaching and Leadership and other school websites.

Demonstrating impact

Schools should demonstrate clearly the impact they are making with the pupil premium in the following ways:

- End of key stage data and other national benchmarks (e.g. Y1 phonics) compare favourably with national data for other pupils in all subjects.
- Diminishing differences over time are shown in RAISEonline and inspection dashboard for different abilities, including the most-able disadvantaged

²⁰ This section draws on the following sources: The TES blog on 28 March 2017 by Lorna Fitzjohn HMI at <https://www.tes.com/blogs/ofsted/ofsteds-blog-lorna-fitzjohn-regional-director-west-midlands-her-presentation-ofsted-and>; Lorna's slides at <https://www.slideshare.net/Ofstednews/pupilpremiumwhatofstedlooksfor>; the TES blog by Sean Harford HMI at <https://www.tes.com/blogs/ofsted/ofsted-blog-sean-harford-tells-teachers-primaryrocks-event-what-ofsted-really-looks>; and, for Early Years information, the TES blog by Gill Evans HMI at <https://www.tes.com/blogs/ofsted/ofsted-blog-gill-jones-ofsteds-myth-busting-guide-early-years>

- School's own information and work in pupils' books demonstrate good progress for current disadvantaged pupils
- Case studies outline the additional provision in place and the difference this is making (progress and barriers being overcome)
- Attendance is improving or being maintained at least in line with the national average
- Personal development, well-being and behaviour are good and exclusion figures are below national average.

Approaches to inspecting pupil premium use and impact

Inspectors do not have a set list of questions. They review information in advance of inspection, including the school's own self-evaluation, information on the website and published data.

Lines of enquiry by inspectors will focus on:

- what barriers school leaders have identified
- what the pupil premium is spent on to improve outcomes for eligible pupils
- what difference this has made
- how school leaders know this
- where the evidence of impact is.

Collection, collation and analysis of data

Inspectors will check the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils through published data, school's own information and pupils' work.

Analyse School Performance progress data sets out an overview of disadvantaged pupils against all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics for key stage 2 and English, mathematics, EBacc and Open elements for key stage 4. Attainment and progress data is shown overall and by ability i.e low, middle and high.

Pupil premium and Progress 8 (P8): inspection dashboard

- Inspectors will see P8 and Attainment 8 (A8) compared between disadvantaged and other pupils first
- They will consider the size of these groups and their contribution to overall P8/A8
- The key comparison inspectors will make is to national other pupils for overall disadvantaged pupils, and for different starting points
- They will also expect schools to have data on the progress of current cohorts.

Pupil premium and Progress 8 (P8): Analyse School Performance

Analyse School Performance now includes clearer emphasis on disadvantaged pupils from different starting points. The summary tables contain P8 and A8 overall by low, middle and high prior attainment for all pupils and disadvantaged.

Early years

The same principle applies: funding must be used to improve outcomes and diminish differences between children and their non pupil premium peers.

Data is published in Analyse School Performance and inspection dashboard and shows where gaps exist.

Nationally in 2016, 69 per cent of all children reached a good level of development (GLD) and 72 per cent of non-FSM children – compared to only 55 per cent of FSM children.

Children looked after (CLA) children and pupil premium: Analyse School Performance

Analyse School Performance also includes information about pupil groups not shown in the inspection dashboard. Children looked after are included.

These charts order groups by progress scores with the highest progress score at the top.

Inspectors will also expect schools to have data on the progress of CLA in current cohorts.

Pupil premium: external review

Inspectors will recommend an external review of the school's use of the pupil premium if they identify weakness regarding the provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

This weakness may exist whether or not a similar weakness exists for other pupils.

The author

Sir John Dunford, a former headteacher and general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, was from 2013 to 2015 the government's independent National Pupil Premium Champion.

This action planning toolkit is based on his presentations at the many pupil premium conferences he has addressed and on chapter 6 of his book, *The School Leadership Journey*, published by John Catt in 2016.

John is currently leading an independent inquiry on examination malpractice for the Joint Council for Qualifications. He has recently retired as chair of Whole Education (www.wholeeducation.org), a network of schools and organisations committed to redefining today's educational offering, in the belief that all young people deserve an engaging and rounded education that supports academic achievement, but also develops the skills, knowledge and qualities needed to flourish in life, learning and work.

He is a trustee of the Learn Academies Trust in the area of Leicestershire where he lives.