

Report on improving provision for pupil premium students

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On Tuesday, 2nd November Sue Higgins and Rob Robson investigated the learning experiences of pupil premium (PP, disadvantaged) students at William Ellis School. They focused on Science, Modern Foreign Languages and History. They visited lessons, spoke to Heads of Department and to students.

Part A: Executive summary of recommendations: Izzy Jones, Acting Headteacher (previously presented to the School Improvement Committee)

1. Data-informed, quality first teaching

In the best lessons seen, pupil premium students thrived on precise direct instruction, highly skilled formative assessment, rich teacher subject knowledge and mutually respectful relationships. In one lesson, a lack of clear behaviour boundaries or appropriate planning meant that all students' learning and welfare was impacted negatively. The work that we do to improve teaching and learning for all students will benefit those who are disadvantaged, but especially teaching and support for improved literacy.

Teachers should have a multi-dimensional view of PP students including FSM status, IDACI score, prior attainment data including KS2, CATS, reading ages. This data should be current, with re-testing as necessary and teachers should be aware of the profiles of the students they teach, as well as knowing them as people.

Assessment and feedback must be clear and robust throughout all key stages, prioritising (some?) PP students for detailed intervention and improvement guidance. This should include a "books first" approach, where students' written work is at the centre of every conversation, e.g. meetings with parents.

2. Focused opportunities for PP students

(Some?) PP students need priority access to high quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG), which has been compromised this academic year by restrictions on work experience and changes in Connexions staffing. Alternatives must be found to ensure that PP students do not miss out on their support. Curriculum pathways guidance (especially KS4 and KS5 choices) must be provided for these students to ensure that they pursue appropriately challenging and facilitating curriculum options, especially those with high prior attainment data.

The school must continue to expand intervention programmes for PP students, including tutoring and mentoring. Students value highly this kind of support from those they can build consistent relationships with. This includes interventions already in place such as City Year mentoring, those due to come online such as staff

year 11 mentoring and Action Tutoring, and other opportunities such as Boxing Academy mentoring and what can be accessed through the National Tutoring Programme.

The school prides itself on a rich programme of extra-curricular opportunities including trips, visits and clubs. Those who lead such activities must be clear about which PP students take part, what the intended value of the activity is and evaluate the benefits for students. While these activities are less possible due to Coronavirus restrictions, those who would normally lead them should consider how the intended value/impact can be achieved in other ways.

3. Improving attendance of PP students to school

While attendance is a national challenge in 2020-21, attendance figures are below national averages and a highly disproportionate number of the school's persistent non-attenders (PNAs) this year and previously are PP students, especially White British Disadvantaged. The attendance strategy needs to be re-focused on these students. Related to this, the school must develop stronger relationships with PP students' families and make increased use of other professional services e.g. referrals to Early Help (up approx. 15% in Camden compared to this time in 2019).

4. Supporting independent learning

It is now clear that all students need access to hardware and connectivity to learn independently. The school has rightly identified that this means dedicated access to a keyboard device – as these arrive, they must be effectively distributed with a clear plan of how they will be used by students. This needs to be balanced by adequate access to computers in school so that teachers are able to explicitly teach students the skills and understanding needed to access the curriculum remotely.

Adequate CPD time needs to be given to teachers so that they have the skills and understanding to teach students effectively, and to build remote learning coherently into the curriculum. This should be supported by high quality online resources for all e.g., e-textbooks.

5. Effective leadership of PP progress and attainment

At all levels, the move this year towards prioritising PP attainment and progress in teacher appraisal should be followed through in line management, mid-year and end of year reviews. Further, middle leaders need a sharper focus on the performance of PP students, and constituent sub-groups, through detailed tracking. This should be prioritised at KS4, as is being developed in English and some other departments. Clear responsibility for advancing the interests of PP students should also be allocated within the SLT.

Part B: Full report

Context

Disadvantaged students at William Ellis School are 52% of the student population. However, the achievement of this group of students is well below that of non-disadvantaged boys in the school and also well below the national attainment and progress for all boys nationally. Although students did not sit public exams in Summer 2020 and the student outcomes at WES were positive overall, there is one very marked and significant feature of the CAGs experience in the school that demands attention. This is the fact that the achievement gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students was apparently exacerbated through the teacher assessment process. For 2020 on the school's P8 calculation the gap had grown to -0.78 where in previous years it had been consistently around -0.5.

A core priority for this academic year will be strengthening the progress and attainment of disadvantaged students throughout the school. This is already an explicit strand in each of the 3 sections of the SDP.

To support the school in designing and implementing strategic actions which will have impact and represent effective use of resources, it was suggested that the school's SIP, Headteacher Consultant and Key governors, along with Head and SLT undertake some evaluation and enquiry activities around four initial key questions :-

Who are the disadvantaged boys at WES?

What are the most common barriers to success for these boys?

What do disadvantaged boys' have to tell us about their experiences of school from Year 7 through to the sixth form?

What helps them thrive? How can we create the right conditions for their success?

The school's Pupil Premium Report is due to be re-visited and updated. The review activities from this term will provide material to inform the strategic approach mapped out in this document and to provide some monitoring and evaluative evidence for the effective use of the pupil premium funding. This version of the PP report will also, critically, need to map out the school's provision planning for these students in terms of remote and blended learning.

Review activities -November 3rd 2020

The reviewers, Rob Robson (Camden School Improvement Partner) and Sue Higgins (Headteacher Consultant) reviewed some key documentation, including the Pupil Premium Report, made seven lesson visits focussing on Science, Modern Foreign Languages and History, met the three subject leaders and held discussion groups with disadvantaged students from Year 11 and Year 10.

Teaching and Learning – What are the most common barriers to success for these boys? What helps them thrive?

Science lessons	www - where the teaching was good or excellent	Ebi- where lessons were not effective
Year 10 Combined Science: Biology Year 10 Combined Science : Chemistry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson planning involved students in thinking and working hard. • Lesson content and activities linked effectively to the relevant section of the SOW. • In the SOW the • Learning objectives clearly identify the knowledge to be covered. There is a strand which highlights the literacy and Maths links which need to focus. • Resources- inc. textbook references are well planned. Lessons are designed around a series of powerpoints. • The SOW strongly reflects the assessment requirements of the GCSE specification and this focus was carried forward into the lesson. • A very strong focus on literacy, tied in with how to tackle a 6 mark question successfully. • Attention given to meaning of command words, as well as use of subject specific vocabulary, students reading aloud. • Consistent expectations about students paying attention, listening to the teacher and to each other. • Teacher quietly and calmly insistent that all students were complying with these expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was insufficient planning to provide stretch and challenge for all students. • A more demanding pace was needed , along with a more skilful repertoire of questioning strategies to provide sharper feedback and to help create a more positive learning environment. • The teacher did not ensure high expectations of behaviour for every student or establish clear and consistent classroom routines. As a result, in one lesson, at least 6 of 12 disadvantaged boys in this group were off- task for the majority of the first 30 minutes of the lesson, distracting each other and disrupting the learning of others. • The learning activities required limited written responses, a missed opportunity for strengthening literacy development and preparing students
History lessons	www – where the teaching was good or excellent	Ebi- where lessons were less strong
Year 11 History x 2 groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students entered the classroom in a calm manner and were greeted by the teachers. The classrooms were well ventilated and the students observed good hand sanitising protocols at the entrance to the classroom; • Opening tasks were challenging and designed to accelerate thinking; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teachers were having to work hard to control behaviour and they were generally working harder than the students; • There was no apparent plan to target or involve PP students; • There was very little independent work;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lessons were well planned and involved students working and thinking hard; • Students from disadvantaged backgrounds were targeted with questions; • The teachers’ questioning techniques were skilled and varied. • In the best lessons, answers to teachers’ questions were passed to other students for fact checking or for others to enrich the answers; • The students enjoyed the lessons. They were clearly engaged, and the teachers set up a well-controlled competitive environment. This is a skilled thing to be able to do in a boys school where competition can become divisive if not well managed. • Debate featured as a useful way of encouraging students to explore their ideas; • There was an expectation that students could work independently and at the appropriate pace; • Praise was well, and appropriately, used. PP students received consistent and strong praise and were often given praise first. In one lesson there was a class ‘Oscar’ for the student who had contributed the most to the lesson – students applauded the winner. 	
MFL lessons	www- where teaching was good or excellent	Ebi – Some barriers to PP students’ achievement
Year 10 French x 3 lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers have a strong professional presence and model courteous, respectful conduct and demeanour which are reciprocated. • Students responded positively to firm insistence on high levels of attentiveness, effort and engagement from everyone. • Classroom atmosphere was productive, with boys working very successfully independently . • In one lesson, students tackled a GCSE written task, fully absorbed in the work,. The assessment criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented student attendance E.g. In one lesson, 2 absentees were PP students. It was evident from their books that there are gaps in their knowledge and understanding opening up around use of future tenses. How can the department find ways of identifying student gaps and find ways of re-teaching missed areas? Perhaps look at deployment of FLAs? • There is a smaller, self-selected group choosing to study double languages but only a third of the group were disadvantaged students, whereas half of the students in the year cohort are

	<p>were explicitly shared, with encouragement to produce written pieces which maximised marks and to use the 'Fantastic French' sheets/ knowledge organisers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students from disadvantaged backgrounds were targeted with questions; • The teachers' use of questioning was highly skilled, but always encouraging boys to finesse their responses- elaborate, extend, improve accuracy of grammar or pronunciation. • Teachers generate a spirit of friendly challenge and competition to produce the best responses • The use of strong techniques such as 'pause-pose-pounce-bounce' ensured students were highly engaged and on their toes as they knew that a question could be for them at any minute; • In one lesson, the teacher showed great skill in accepting a wrong answer and writing on the board and then waiting for students to spot the mistake. This technique really made students think and debate what they were reading. • High level of challenge: detailed teaching of grammatical structures and, in one lesson, although an advanced double language group the students were, ambitiously, being introduced to the subjunctive in the first term of Year 10. 	<p>PEPP students. How can the department encourage more boys to opt into this successful strand of curriculum provision?</p>
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Student Voice – What do disadvantaged boys have to tell us about their experiences of school from Year7 through to the sixth form?

Year 11 students

Some points of feedback:-

The students

- Students were loyal to the school and described the teaching as generally of a good standard;

- Students were clear that behaviour was generally good and were full of praise for what they said was an excellent community atmosphere where everyone knew each other;
- Students identified a need for more and better careers advice. This has been the age group who have missed out through a combination of staffing issues and Covid-19. There was a feeling among some students that the range of different jobs that they were being exposed to was limited;
- Greater clarity is needed about what additional revision is available. Students were very clear how maths revision worked but uncertain about English and whether there would opportunities to revise in other subject area;
- Boys were most worried about physics. They were clear that a number and variable quality of different physics teachers had caused issues with their learning;
- Students described that they had engaged in clubs and extracurricular activity in Years 7 – 9 but had drifted away from them in Year 10. They thought the range of opportunities was very good and all of them had enjoyed their time at The Mill;
- Had a mix of opinions about Microsoft Teams – one student described it as the ‘best thing that had happened’ for his revision whereas others wanted more guidance and found some of the resources a little confusing. Everybody thought that Teams was beneficial and a good addition.

Year 10 students

Some points of feedback: -

- Combined Science – students seemed vague / confused about how they had ended up doing Combined Science and how some students are studying Triple Science GCSEs.
- They are worried about their progress in Physics, where the teacher is absent, and they are having a supply teacher.
- They really enjoy practicals in Science – they were particularly enthusiastic about recently dissecting a sheep’s heart....
- Some students could identify ways that they can reinforce their learning beyond the classroom-locating work on Teams, reviewing material in their exercise books, using text/revision books, looking at AQA on-line... Need to ensure all students are well-equipped and well-informed to engage with independent learning.
- Boys knew that if you were prepared to pay then other resources, like revision guides, were available.
- Students identified some different subjects where they are enthusiastic about their learning and making good progress. French, Food Technology, PE and Business were all courses where they feel they are being successful learners. They valued practical learning experiences. Their books for some of these subjects were well-presented and showed good productivity since September. Again, they were vague about their reasons for choosing certain option subjects, but ‘new’ subjects were clearly popular for Year 9 students and they were attracted by the vocational possibilities of PE, Business and Food Tech. They are inspired by future career possibilities. They were vague about the quality and extent of careers advice they had received and the options process.
- Boys place great store by test scores/ formal assessment feedback as reliable evidence of how well they are doing.
- Exploring behaviour issues, particularly with boys who demonstrated challenging behaviour in the Chemistry lesson, it is clear that these students struggle with self-regulation and expect teachers to discipline them for unacceptable behaviour. There was a suggestion that parents should be kept better informed of their sons’ poor behaviour in lessons as their involvement would ensure they improve behaviour more rapidly.

- There was some discussion of additional learning / enrichment opportunities. For example, visits abroad. One student had visited Spain on a family visit but otherwise the boys had not travelled abroad. They were aware of school trips e.g. to Boulogne but they quoted the price of the trip (over £100) and said it was too expensive.
- The students in the group had had different experiences of lock-down learning. Some had found it an okay experience as they had been able to keep up with remote learning. Others had had a more difficult time- usually as a result of living in households with lots of individuals needing to use computer equipment all at the same time. The reflective and mature attitudes of the boys in this situation were commendable.
- Some boys were feeling anxious about the return to school – they were concerned about the difficulties of social- distancing in the building, general strain about there being lots of problems and difficulties in their world. Do students know what additional support is available for them in school? What are the referral/self-referral processes?

Leadership & management – What are the most common barriers to success for these boys? What helps them thrive?

- One head of department thought that pupil premium students struggled more with literacy and that poor standards of literacy are a barrier for students to be able to write fluently.
- One head of department was clear that the teaching team’s priority was reviewing and rewriting high quality SOWs that all teachers could follow. This would improve consistency in the quality of teaching and give all students equal access to successful learning experiences.
- One head of department was developing successful literacy strategies in her own classroom and knew they would support the progress of disadvantaged boys but still had to ensure all teachers in the department were implementing these strategies.
- There was an uncertainty about how to intervene effectively with students who were persistently absent.
- One head of department did not have a clear understanding of the standards of teaching in their department.
- One head of department was eager to be introduced to strategies that would help accelerate PP students’ progress e.g. suggesting that the team would benefit about making books and student work the focus of his meetings so that consistent but manageable moderation became part of the department’s work.
- Overall, subject leaders had not yet formalised a departmental strategy to raise the achievement of disadvantaged students.

Part C: Recommendations

A one-day review can provide only a snapshot of the learning experiences of this large group of students. The evidence and material collected needs to sit alongside other data and qualitative and quantitative evaluative evidence that already exists in the school.

Who are the disadvantaged boys at William Ellis?

Using a full range of attainment and background data to identify possible barriers to student achievement and their learning potential

- Fully analyse prior attainment data on entry for this group of students. SEND team should become involved with boys with low prior attainment on entry and plan for further assessment and screening and for additional support and intervention.
- Identify on entry and also plan additional support and monitoring for PP boys who are high attainers.
- Sharpen the identification of learning potential and learning needs with a full analysis of Reading Age scores and CATs scores. (The majority of PP boys are entering the school with average KS2 scaled scores but provisional look at other data highlights some interesting and anomalous cases e.g. students in Year 10 who have average KS2 data but CATs scores at 135 indicating exceptional cognitive ability. NB Very few PP students achieve top grades.)
- Ensure teachers have a multi-dimensional view of PP students by providing a range of background information – including FSM status, IDACI scores, ethnicity, EAL status, diagnosed SEND needs, housing needs (inc. over-crowding), boys who are carers- formal or informal, families with Social Services involvement etc.
- Consider producing Learner Profiles for disadvantaged students, along the lines of SEND Learning Passports to summarise and communicate the main needs and effective teaching & support strategies for individual students. Schools which have introduced this approach argue that it is a key factor in improving provision and outcomes for disadvantaged students.

Reducing high rates of absence for disadvantaged students (NB -PP boys at WES are less likely to be in lessons than their non-disadvantaged peers)

- Improve the attendance of PP students which is currently very low compared to non-disadvantaged students.
- Prioritise work with families and other agencies to reduce the numbers of persistent absentees. Currently, disadvantaged boys are twice as likely to be persistent absentees. This is leading to substantial loss of learning – regardless of Covid-19 impact.
- Consider what catch -up provision subject departments can reasonably make for boys with erratic attendance.

What are the most common barriers to success for these boys? What helps them thrive? How can we create the right conditions for their success?

Ensuring disadvantaged boys receive Quality First Teaching as a daily diet.

- Ensure that all teachers are managing classroom behaviour consistently in line with the school's behaviour policy and procedures and creating a positive learning environment. The learning and progress of disadvantaged students are likely to be impacted more negatively than their non-disadvantaged peers where expectations of work ethic and productivity are not sufficiently high and there is a lack of clear behaviour boundaries
- Provide lessons taught by subject specialists where the learning activities are well-planned and their relevance and purpose is clear and boys are encouraged to engage enthusiastically.

- Ensure that staff understand that, although there may be a correlation between PP students and achievement there is not a causation. Strong teachers can prioritise giving these boys extra attention in lessons e.g. by targeting more questioning at them to check their learning, spending more time marking their books, giving them lots of positive verbal feedback, support and challenge.
- Establish a 'pupil premium first' culture where the first books to be marked and moderated will always be those of PP students.

Improving assessment practices and feedback on progress

- Support all teachers to use highly skilled formative assessment and strong questioning techniques within lessons to deepen students' learning.
- Plan a schedule of low stakes and formalised assessments within departments. Students set great store by test marks and exam results and it is important that they are getting sharp feedback about what they know and can do and what they still need to learn and understand so they can improve
- Conduct blind marking of Year 11, and possibly all, assessments. The school should organise any formal assessments to be completed without student names (perhaps using exam or admissions numbers). The assignments should then be equally distributed for marking and then a moderation exercise should take place. .

All teachers energetically and consistently implementing all elements of whole school literacy strategy

- Ensure each subject teacher has a plan for strengthening literacy in their lessons. It is evident that disadvantaged boys will benefit greatly from successful work of teachers throughout the school in explicitly developing the literacy skills of all their students. PP boys are already likely to have lower literacy levels on their entry to the school than their non-disadvantaged peers e.g. in current Year 7 two-thirds of the pupils with reading ages below their chronological age were eligible for Pupil Premium.

Strengthening and prioritising CEIAG Provision for disadvantaged students

- Plan a coherent, systematic and comprehensive raising aspirations strategy Years7-13 for disadvantaged students to sit alongside the raising achievement strategy.
- Prioritise disadvantaged boys for careers interviews and for aspirational placements for work experience.
- Create active partnership projects with a range of organisations offering careers and work-related programmes who can provide additional support to PP students when selecting their GCSE options and imagining their futures in the world of work and higher education.

Supporting independent learning

- Ensure that there is a clear picture for remote learning which includes a clear record of which students may not be able to access remote learning through either not having devices or having devices which are subject to data capping. Action needs to be taken to ensure that there is an equality of access for all PP students.
- Review the use of Microsoft Teams and work out how to get greater consistency in the way that material is laid out. Once the architecture of the site has been established and expectations about use have been clearly communicated to staff, they need individual training on it. Expectations and the way Teams is to be used needs to be taught explicitly to students.

- Audit availability of other resources. E.g study spaces in schools, textbooks, revision guides.
- Decide which subjects (students?) should use knowledge organisers and which subjects will not (with a clear narrative on those decisions). Once this decision has been made, there needs to be a systematic roll out (prioritising Year 11).
- Reduce the higher number of homework concerns for disadvantaged students in every year group.

Opening up opportunities for building cultural and social capital

- Map the extra-curricular activities in the school and check how many PP students are attending clubs – from this information, the school should work out ways of encouraging and incentivising PP students to attend.
- Revisit the charging policy and consider how well it supports disadvantaged students easily accessing the school's rich programme of extra-curricular and enrichment activities.

Planning specific and targeted interventions to maximise impact

- Identify disadvantaged students who would benefit from some additional individual or small group interventions and support. These need to be carefully planned and the PP students who would most benefit from them identified and then successfully engaged in these initiatives.
- Identify key staff to take responsibility for managing and quality assuring these interventions so that they are impactful and provide value for money. National Tutoring Programme will provide a great opportunity to redesign the ways these programmes are managed, monitored and evaluated.
- Research other bodies and organisations who would want to develop partnership projects with the school focussing on improving outcomes and provision for PP students and adding additional capacity.

Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership of PP progress and attainment

- Identify appraisal targets for all members of staff relating to improved performance of disadvantaged students.
- Ensure regular close monitoring by relevant SLT members of the specific strand relating to the performance and quality of education for disadvantaged and vulnerable students.
- Establish clear responsibility for advancing the interests of PP students within the SLT team.
- Increase responsibility of subject leaders for improving the achievement of disadvantaged students in their subject areas. All middle leaders have been given specific responsibility for delivering on the key improvement priority of narrowing the achievement gap. This is reflected in Department development Plans, appraisal objectives for 2020-2021.
- Tracking the performance of PP students should become a standing item for line management meetings and subject team meetings.
- Subject teams should review their curriculum offer and plans and their teaching and learning policies so they can clearly identify all the steps they are taking to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged boys in their subject areas. Middle leaders should then actively monitor that initiatives and strategies are being consistently implemented by all teachers.

- Make provision and outcomes of PP students a key focus of the newly launched departmental reviews.
- Provide subject leaders with an additional budget allocation to use to support PP boys, purchase resources etc. Some subjects at KS4 have a higher proportion of disadvantaged boys than others and this should be factored in.
- Consider a 'books (student work) first' culture – if every meeting started with three books / pieces of work that the staff attending the meeting looked at and moderated, standards would be understood quickly. It is recommended that at every meeting – curriculum, pastoral and senior – this technique is used. It is also recommended that any meeting with a parent staff should share the standard of work to establish the point of the meeting (the standard of that student's education).
- Encourage leaders at all levels to be restless to research, enquire and explore successful approaches to improving the experiences and outcomes of disadvantaged students in other schools and to design and champion best practice projects.