A	S	P	I	R	E

to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils

Aspire

Secure

Provide

To raise attainment

Intervene

Respond

Evaluate

A S P I R E

to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils

It is a fact that the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils in the UK falls dramatically short of their more advantaged peers and the picture within the East Riding mirrors that of the rest of the country. In order to redress this imbalance, the Local Authority has introduced a clearly focused drive to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Under the heading of 'ASPIRE' (Aspire, Secure, Provide, Intervene, Respond, Evaluate), schools have been asked to sign up to a 'disadvantage charter', designed to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. To support and encourage this vital work in schools, the Local Authority is providing a range of 'ASPIRE' CPD events and supporting documentation to raise awareness of the impact of disadvantage and to improve the outcomes for these pupils.

This booklet has been produced as a generic guide to raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils. Making use of recent academic research and findings from nationally published case studies, it identifies six key areas of focus for raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils. Each section is broken down into fully-explained sub-sections, which include examples of potential approaches to establishing, improving or embedding the principles of 'ASPIRE' within the school context. Further to this, the booklet provides a range of diagnostic questions to allow for rigorous and challenging self-evaluation of the impact of current provision. However, it is important to include a cautionary note that there is no 'silver bullet' that will single-handedly re-align the progress and attainment of the most and least disadvantaged. Schools can only do this by understanding their own context and accurately identifying the barriers to learning that their own students face. This booklet can act as a guide, which will help to generate principles and ideas; however, ultimate success comes down to the degree to which a coherent, well-evaluated, impactful and fit-for-purpose policy is designed and Implemented in each school or setting.
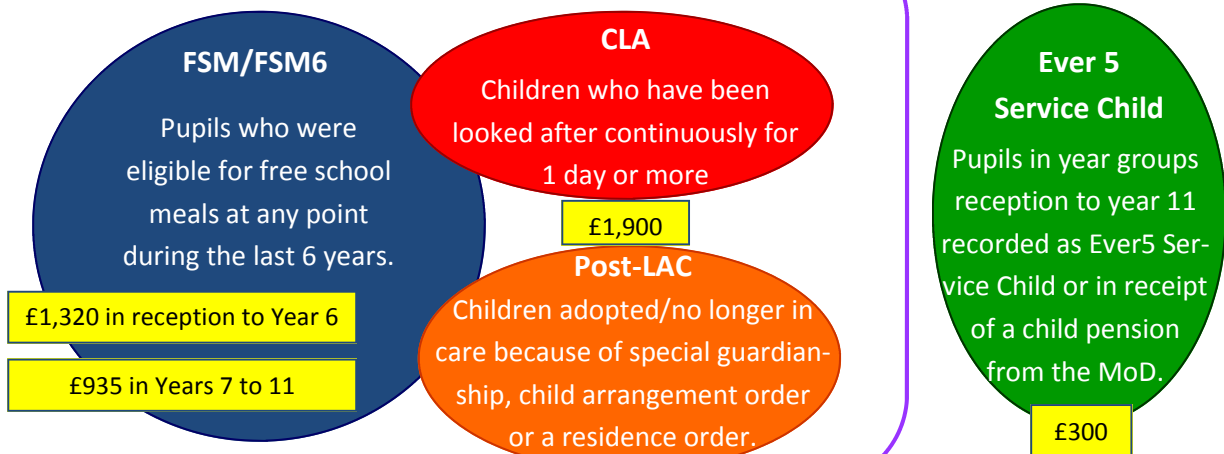
to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils

Definitions of disadvantage

A pupil is defined as disadvantaged in performance tables and in RAISEonline if they have been either: eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years (FSM6); looked after continuously for one day or more (CLA) or adopted from care (post-LAC). The Pupil Premium Grant is provided to schools to support the attainment and progress of disadvantaged children - as defined above - and the children who have had a parent in the armed forces at any point in the last 5 years (Ever5 Service Child) or are in receipt of a child pension from the Ministry of Defence. The diagram below outlines the funding allocations for 2015-16.

In receipt of Pupil Premium Grant

Defined as disadvantaged

FSM/FSM6

Pupils who were eligible for free school meals at any point during the last 6 years.

£1,320 in reception to Year 6

£935 in Years 7 to 11

CLA

Children who have been looked after continuously for 1 day or more

£1,900

Post-LAC

Children adopted/no longer in care because of special guardianship, child arrangement order or a residence order.

Ever 5 Service Child

Pupils in year groups reception to year 11 recorded as Ever5 Service Child or in receipt of a child pension from the MoD.

£300

Vulnerable children

Our school communities are constructed of pupils from a variety of different backgrounds, some of whom have specific requirements to enable them to access education as effectively as their peers. In order to ensure that all students make at least expected progress, tracking of key groups of students, often collectively known as 'vulnerable children', is undertaken. Such groups of students could include, amongst others, those students with special educational needs, EAL students, lower ability students and traveller children. Whilst it is important that the performance of these students is monitored and appropriate interventions are employed, it is worth acknowledging that these groups are not defined as disadvantaged and therefore are not included in disadvantage statistics in performance tables and in RAISEonline.

Aspire	**S**ecure	**P**rovide	**I**ntervene	**R**espond	**E**valuate

Expect success	Promote challenge	Aspirational culture

Aspire Overview

- Create a whole-school culture that demands success, where aiming high is actively encouraged and high levels of achievement are the expectation for all.

- Reward and applaud success of all kinds.

- Set high standards for all students, breaking down the barriers that financial inequality creates, to ensure that high aspirations are the expectation for all.

- Remember that disadvantage does not equate to low ability.

- Set challenging targets which are appropriate to the ability level of the student, irrespective of their financial background.

- Remember that more-able disadvantaged students will find it significantly more difficult to catch up if they fall behind, than would their more advantaged peers.

- Ensure disadvantage has a high profile within the school and that it does not become an invisible issue.

- Make the progress of disadvantaged pupils a key performance management or appraisal objective.

Expect success

Attitudes play a crucial role in determining the educational outcomes of all students. Those who are encouraged and supported to adopt and nurture an optimistic and resilient attitude to learning are those who tend to achieve the highest. Promoting a growth mind-set is an important aspect of this. Students who have a growth mind-set accept that the level of their success is not fixed but can, through hard-work, effort and an accommodating attitude, be pushed beyond their expectations. For students who benefit from the variety of experiences that financial advantage can bring, adopting a growth mind-set is not always easy; therefore, students who have had an economically disadvantaged background, which may have limited their experiences, could be more likely to develop fixed expectations that are more difficult to overcome. Nevertheless, even amongst the most disadvantaged communities and families, we see and hear of examples of groups or individuals that see no limits to their potential and see that success is not a reserve of privilege. By creating atmospheres, environments and cultures which embed the ethos that success can be expected, attitudes of self-belief and self-confidence can be promoted. For the disadvantaged pupil, recognising that hard-work and effort go hand-in-hand with success can be a powerfully motivating tool, especially if this message can be demonstrated through local role models. Establishing steps of success, where achievement and progress are frequently recognised and rewarded, is an important aspect in keeping motivation levels high for such students for whom the 'here and now' is of primary importance.

Promote challenge

Whilst it goes without saying that a proportion of disadvantaged students will also be of a lower ability, it is vitally important (if we are to raise the attainment of the disadvantaged) that the two not be confused. It equally goes without saying that a proportion of disadvantaged students will also be of a higher ability. Disadvantage does not discriminate between ability bands and schools need to be aware of any 'watering-down' which occurs in the classroom because of barriers to learning that may by created by the attitudes of some disadvantaged students. Challenge that is appropriate to the ability of the student should be prioritised, whilst an awareness of each individual disadvantaged student's circumstance should be taken into account to address their additional needs. Research indicates that the ability band of the disadvantaged pupil needs to be the most significant factor in determining the learning opportunities for each student. When compared to their more advantaged peers, higher-ability disadvantaged students will find it significantly more difficult to catch up if they fall behind than lower-ability disadvantaged pupils will. In effect, therefore, the interventions that are introduced by the school to close disadvantaged gaps (including the funding dedicated and the monitoring and evaluation undertaken) could actually serve to undermine the school's good intentions, if the school's actions are poorly-focused and fail to take into account the ability band of individual students. It is essential that schools set ambitious and aspirational targets for all disadvantaged pupils and do not limit their more able students to a 'finishing line' of average attainment.

Aspirational culture

If the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils are to be maximised, then the provision for this group must to have a high profile within schools and not be allowed to be an 'invisible' issue with success or lack of success being left to chance. Whilst every family circumstance is different and it is important that the school addresses the specific barriers to learning that they have identified for their disadvantaged students, there are some common themes which have been identified in a range of studies. One of these is that pupils from poor backgrounds may feel that school offers them very little or that they have no contribution to make to the school. This could stem from negative attitudes towards education from parents or communities and limited recognition from the school of the skills and talents of an individual child. It is vitally important, therefore, for schools to promote a culture of aspiration and achievement, where success is acknowledged, applauded and rewarded. Raising the profile of disadvantage and understanding the circumstances of individual pupils is essential to ensure that disadvantaged pupils feel that school meets their needs to feel noticed, understood and valued for their unique contributions to the school community.

Aspire

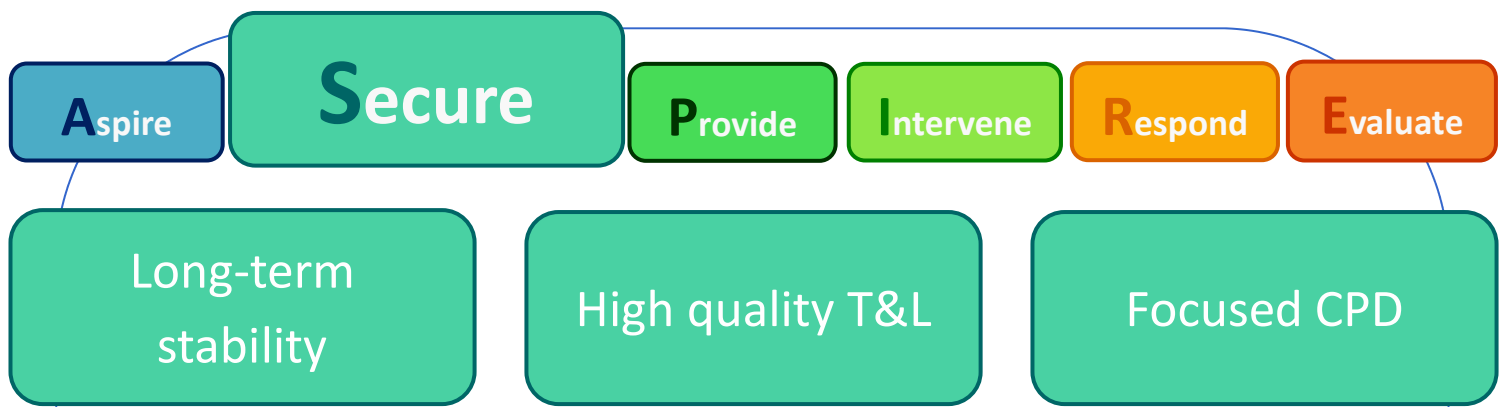| Secure | Provide | Intervene | Respond | Evaluate |

Aspire
Possible approaches

- Use evidence-based research to guide intervention choices.
- Ensure interventions are time-limited to maximise their impact.
- Set realistic but challenging success criteria based on aspirational targets and attainment data.
- Recognise and look at ways to overcome barriers to learning, which could impact upon success.
- Link interventions to day-to-day teaching.
- Timetable interventions carefully to minimise disruptions to other areas of the curriculum.
- Make a key member of the SLT the school's 'disadvantage champion', assigning them responsibility for tracking the use of funding and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of interventions.
- Ensure governors are actively involved in writing policies, deciding on funding allocations, holding SLT to account over improvements and liaising with parents.
- Promote an aspirational culture, where success is acknowledged, applauded and rewarded.
- Ring-fence funding to ensure dedicated spending on disadvantage.
- Produce policies, focused on approaches to raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and on the allocation of funding; distribute these to all staff and publish on the school website.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the disadvantaged pupils within the school; promote accountability and encourage professional dialogue around approaches to raising the attainment of these pupils.
- Ensure transition between schools or key stages includes sufficient focus on disadvantaged pupils to allow for identification of needs and consideration of successful/unsuccessful approaches for specific individuals.
- Make disadvantaged pupils a compulsory agenda item focus at all whole school, pastoral and departmental meetings.
- Allocate time during INSET for a specific disadvantage focus.
- Make disadvantage a key focus of Performance Management to raise levels of accountability and awareness.

- Provide regular, high-quality CPD on differentiation and how to challenge the more able.
- Provide CPD on addressing achievement at A/A* (secondary) and 'greater depth' (primary).
- Undertake regular monitoring and evaluation activities, focused on challenging the most able.
- Introduce regular, timetabled 'challenge' lessons.
- Use role models from the local community, e.g guest speakers, mentors, ex-students or other local success stories.
- Recruit employees from within the community.
- Create 'aim higher' links with Higher Education institutions.

Aspire
Diagnostic questions

- How far does the culture of the school promote aspiration?
- Are targets for children set at FFT20 or higher and what impact does this have?
- At what age are students first engaged in discussions within school about their aspirations for the future and how does the school respond to these aspirations?
- Do students within the school have regular opportunities to hear about pathways to different careers or about alternative pathways to university?
- Are all teachers aware of the aspirations that students hold for their future and do teachers make links between these aspirations and the subject that they teach?

| Aspire | Secure | Provide | Intervene | Respond | Evaluate |

| Long-term stability | High quality T&L | Focused CPD |

Secure Overview

- Aim to establish an approach to raising the attainment of disadvantaged students, which can continue to ensure positive outcomes when Pupil Premium funding is reduced in the future.

- Ensure that consistently high quality wave one teaching is the expectation, as it is crucial to the achievement of all students.

- Remember that good teaching has a disproportionately positive impact on disadvantaged students, whereas poor teaching has a disproportionately negative impact on them.

- Practised and proven systems and strategies to reach intended learning outcomes will maximise progress.

- Providing immediate feedback, through the use of assessment for learning techniques, is the best form of assessment to engage the disadvantaged in deepening their understanding.

- Carefully target CPD to the needs of students, staff and school.

- Provide quality CPD for TAs to ensure that they are highly skilled.

- Carefully, rather than indiscriminately, deploy TAs to maximise the impact of their work

Long-term stability

Ofsted findings suggest that schools which successfully raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils take a long-term view about how this can be achieved and opt for sustainability rather than 'quick fixes'. Such schools recognise that the government-provided dedicated funding to close the gap may have a finite lifespan; therefore, they use it to build long-term capacity through the creation of processes, systems and strategies which can be sustained beyond the life of the Pupil Premium Grant. Investment in the quality of teaching and learning, partly by providing CPD for teachers and teaching assistants, is crucial to ensure that the difference is made at the point of first teaching, reducing the need for add-on interventions. In addition, embedding enrichment activities into the school curriculum and establishing methods of ensuring full access to the curriculum for all students will not only improve outcomes for all pupils, but it will also create a position sufficiently strong to prevent the widening of the disadvantage gap should the current allocation of funding be cut.

High quality T&L

Schools which successfully raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils prioritise high-quality teaching and learning, focusing (in the first instance) on whole-class strategies for ensuring progress. Targeted interventions then supplement and complement this learning rather than replacing the whole-class approach to accommodate for weaknesses within teaching.

The best way to deal with the disadvantaged gap is to prevent it from developing in the first place. The teacher who knows the child, knows that they are disadvantaged and knows what their individual barriers to learning are can choose their method of approach to the learning, in order to keep all pupils interested and engaged and can also create a learning environment which will maximise progress. For this to happen, there must be a whole-school comprehensive understanding of who is disadvantaged and what barriers to learning these individuals may face. In addition, regular assessment for learning should be used to immediately assess understanding and provide instant feedback and short-term targets, which are crucial to some disadvantaged students who value the 'here and now' and may lack the resilience and self-motivation to persevere to larger goals. This high-quality teaching must be supported by rigorous monitoring, which quickly identifies and addresses any dip in progress for disadvantaged pupils.

The Ofsted criteria for Outstanding teaching complement this entirely, as they include: high-quality differentiation, based on the knowledge of each individual's needs to challenge each learner in a manner fit for purpose; the planning of engaging and stimulating activities to capture interest and enthuse learning and the real time assessment of progress to allow dynamic reactions, which will ensure that all students make progress. The best teachers do this automatically and have well-thought-through, practised and proven systems and strategies to promote learning. These processes provide the structure to learning and the mode of delivery is used to complement them rather than to compensate for weaknesses within them. Variety is recognised as essential but clear evaluation of the intended learning outcome drives the choice of approach. All students, including the most disadvantaged, can thrive under such conditions.

Focused CPD

All students, even the most disadvantaged, can maximise their progress when they encounter the highest quality teaching and learning. Research suggests that disadvantaged students progress better when learning is structured around practised and proven systems and strategies, and through the introduction of new teaching strategies. Therefore, the quality of CPD that staff are provided with is important to help them establish, maintain and improve these systems and strategies and to introduce new evidence-based examples to maximise progress. However, it is important that CPD is carefully targeted to the needs of students, staff and the school and that CPD provision is linked to performance management and the outcomes of rigorous monitoring. The role of teaching assistants and the quality of the CPD on offer to them is particularly vital. Ofsted findings indicate that the indiscriminate use of teaching assistants can have little impact or even a negative impact on learning; therefore, caution needs to be employed, especially given cost implications. On the other hand, well-qualified, highly-skilled and carefully deployed teaching assistants can be a priceless asset in helping to raise attainment. Therefore knowledge of need and investment in the right CPD for all staff can play a significant role in raising standards for all.
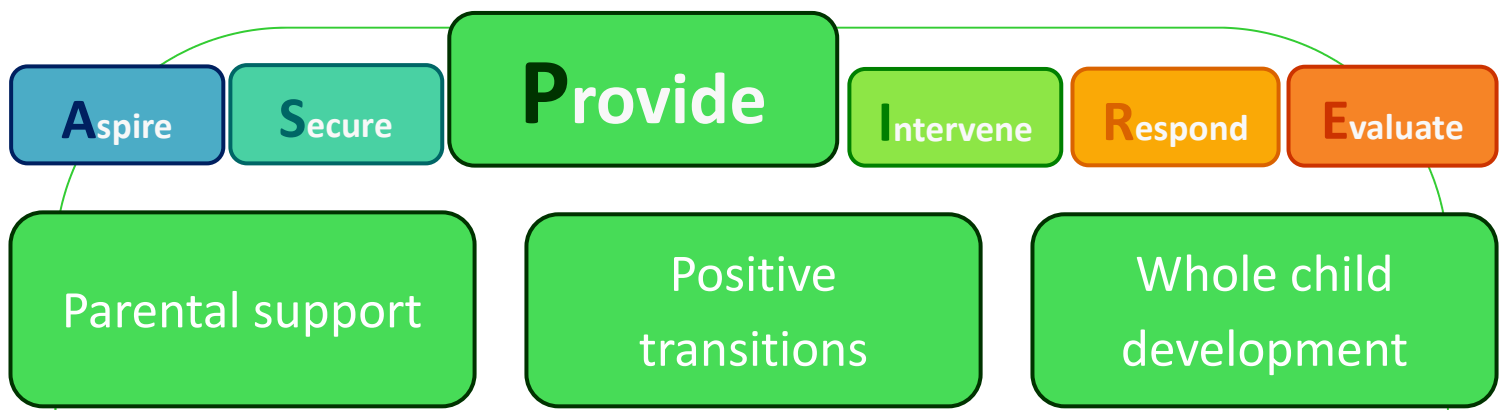
Secure
Possible approaches

- Establish CPD needs and invest in high-quality training.
- Invest in the quality of everyday teaching and learning at point of first teaching.
- Ring-fence funding for CPD and cultural/enrichment experiences.
- Focus on improving basic skills and provide staff with CPD to improve confidence in supporting English & Maths.
- Set up rigorous data systems to allow carefully focused and accurately targeted 1:1 and small group interventions.
- Plan for staff retention to ensure consistency and continuity.
- Invest in high-quality induction for new staff to quickly get them up to speed.
- Invest in work on key barriers to learning, pastoral activities and mentoring schemes.
- Invest in community links, family links and transitions and create partnerships and collaborations with other schools and settings.
- Invest in self-study facilities and capabilities.
- Ensure that the best teachers lead the education of disadvantaged pupils, including in interventions.
- Encourage regular use of co-operative learning and structured group work.
- Maximise opportunities for 'talk for learning'.
- Embed the use of AfL and encourage immediate feedback and lesson adaptation where needs arise.
- Develop the use of meta-cognition processes to develop resilience and a 'can-do' attitude to learning.
- Place equal value on immediate verbal feedback as detailed written feedback.
- Provide regular opportunities for sharing best practice.
- Encourage team–teaching and peer-to-peer CPD to share best practice.
- Encourage collaborative planning.
- Ensure all teachers and TAs are aware of who the disadvantaged pupils are, as well as the pupils' personal circumstances and their potential barriers to learning.
- Ensure that all staff are provided with accurate data and ambitious performance targets for disadvantaged pupils.
- Analyse key strengths of TAs and deploy them to maximise progress and extend or revise their working hours to allow them to plan and review learning collaboratively with teachers.
- Ensure that strategies/CPD needs for raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils are part of Performance Management processes.
- Increase the skills of staff, rather than increasing numbers of staff.

Secure
Diagnostic questions

- How are CPD needs identified and actioned?
- How effective are the pastoral systems within the school in addressing the long-term needs of disadvantage and helping to break down barriers to learning?
- How are TA's deployed to support the disadvantaged and what is the impact of this work?
- What training do TA's receive to support the disadvantaged and how effectively does this help to raise attainment?
- How robust are the schools systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning?

Aspire	Secure	**Provide**	Intervene	Respond	Evaluate

Parental support	Positive transitions	Whole child development

Provide Overview

- Establishing effective parent/school relationships and getting parents 'on-board' is a vital ingredient of success.

- Parents can play a hugely positive role in influencing pupils' attitudes to learning.

- Remember that not effectively engaging parents in the school community may mean that parental attitudes to education could be a major barrier to pupils' learning.

- Ensure that all staff acknowledge that parents may feel uncomfortable in the school setting and that staff respond sensitively to the social and emotional needs of the whole family, rather than just the pupil.

- Provide academic, social or emotional support for disadvantaged pupils to enable them to make progress.

- Cross-phase and cross-curricular coordination is essential to ensure that children do not suffer unnecessary dips in progress.

- Continuity and consistency of approach across key stages is crucial to securing long-term positive outcomes for pupils.

- Ensure that every effort is made to support children in overcoming barriers associated with disadvantage, such as: poor attendance, poor behaviour, lack of confidence, poor health, low levels of concentration and lack of access to educational resources.

- Increasing the range of cultural experiences that pupils have access to may raise their aspirations.

Parental support

For all students, no matter what their background, parental influence is the principle way that attitudes and opinions are formed. For the most vulnerable, who may struggle to develop effective peer relationships, this influence is heightened further. Ensuring that the parents of disadvantaged pupils are 'on-board' with the learning journey of their children and that parental/school relationships are positive can be a powerful motivator for increasing pupil engagement. Unfortunately, many disadvantaged pupils may be influenced by negative perceptions of the value of education that their parents or other relatives may hold, due to their own negative experiences of education. This could be coupled with feelings of disillusionment and isolation from society if low income or hardened unemployment has created an attitude of blame and a lack of respect towards institutions. Exposure to such negatives at such an impressionable age is likely to instil similar views in disadvantaged children. Even where such attitudes do not exist, the parents of disadvantaged pupils may well lack confidence in their own academic ability. An associated lack of self-esteem could create a reluctance to engage with schools out of fear of being 'out of their depth'. Furthermore, a lack of time may be a factor creating a barrier to effective home-school relationships (especially in single-parent families) and a perceived lack of parental interest in pupils' education could be de-motivating to disadvantaged pupils. Establishing positive attitudes towards learning - for both pupils and their families is therefore crucial for the success of all students. If we are to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, then it is essential that positive attitudes towards education are reinforced at home. Positive and supportive parental relationships are therefore essential to creating the environment for success.

Positive transitions

An irrefutable fact about every school age child in this country is that they will, at some point in their education, go through a phase of transition. What is less certain is the form and process that the transition will take, including the quality of the experience and the impact that it will have upon academic progress. Unless carefully managed and catered for, from the earliest age disadvantage creates difference. For example: by 22 months, development gaps between the advantaged and the disadvantaged can have appeared. By age 3, disadvantaged pupils are more likely to have a lower level of vocabulary. Furthermore, no matter what their starting point when they reach school age, unless managed carefully, disadvantaged pupils will make slower progress than their more advantaged peers and are less likely to make two levels of progress across a key stage. Many schools recognise this fact and successfully manage to prevent the occurrence of a disadvantage gap or narrow any existing gap whilst the pupil is on their roll. Unfortunately, unless high quality co-ordination work is undertaken at key transitional phases, including the sharing of individual disadvantage circumstance, prior learning data and best teaching approaches, much of this hard-work can be undone and previously narrowed or closed gaps can re-open. For example: research reveals that there can be a KS3 'challenge dip' for the most able disadvantaged students, resulting in them losing ground with their peers in KS3 and then struggling to catch up in KS4. Transition with a clear focus on the needs of disadvantaged pupils could play a role in preventing this gap from developing. Therefore - be it from nursery to EYFS, KS2 to KS3 or from KS4 to KS5 - recognition of the negative effect that transition can have upon the progress of a disadvantaged pupil and a willingness to accept ongoing responsibility in ensuring that progress doesn't stutter or stall during a transitional phase could make a big difference to raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Continuity and consistency across the key stages is essential to ensure that the experience of school remains positive for disadvantaged pupils.

Whole child development

Academic success is, of course, what schools strive to achieve for their students. In order to do this, the creation of an environment and atmosphere for learning which supports the aspirational ethos of the school is vital. For many pupils, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, it is important to develop meaningful and positive links between home and the school, so that the academic focus and high expectations for educational achievement which are modelled in school can be echoed at home. Beyond this, a variety of regular inspirational cultural opportunities may well form part of the life experiences of more advantaged children. For families in a position of financial disadvantage, accessing such cultural experiences may simply be beyond their means and could well limit the development of the whole child, especially if this is also coupled with a sense of scepticism regarding the value of education and culture. Whilst many may see such attitudes as a societal rather than educational issue, schools are in the privileged position of being able to offer experiences which go beyond the solely academic and in this way they can play an important role in the creation of well-rounded, educationally proficient and culturally experienced individuals.

Provide
Possible approaches

- Provide online support and direction to help parents to support their children with homework activities.
- Run parental activities based on developing parenting skills and developing skills to support the learning of their children.
- Encourage parents to volunteer in the school.
- Provide a toy, book and equipment library.
- Provide after-school drop-in activities for children and their parents, for example 'board games'.
- Set up parent support groups focused on tackling regular 'barriers' to engagement with the school and the learning of their children.
- Provide adult education sessions and learning courses.
- Offer meetings at 'out of office' times, over the phone or via new technologies; offer crèches at parents evenings.
- Make use of community 'outreach' facilities and develop close links with children's support services.
- Provide carefully-planned summer schools, which explicitly target support at disadvantaged pupils and focus on basic skills development, as well as social skills and relationship building.
- Ensure that the schools 'disadvantage champion' plays a leading role in the transition process, working closely with feeder schools or settings to correctly target the 'disadvantage audience' and establish a constructive dialogue that explores ways in which their needs have previously been met and catered for.
- Ensure that behaviour, exclusion and absence policies are closely linked to high aspiration.
- Provide positive role models from within the community or beyond. Work closely with parents and carers to build relationships and demonstrate the worth of education.
- Generate close links with business and with further and higher education institutes in order to raise aspiration and highlight aspirational pathways; provide high quality careers and next-step guidance.
- Work to improve pupils' social and emotional skills, using outside agencies and specialists where appropriate.
- Provide support for older pupils to study independently outside of the school day.
- Enhance the curriculum and cultural experiences of pupils.
- Create nurture groups to support those with low confidence and low self-esteem.
- Provide clearly-focused, high-quality and regularly-evaluated pastoral care.
- Introduce weekly enrichment periods or enrichment days dispersed throughout the school year.
- Develop community links with local clubs, sports teams, and national initiatives.
- Access enrichment services offered by local authorities; for example: school music services.

Provide
Diagnostic questions

- What extra-curricular activities or enrichment programmes are embedded and to what extent are they accessed by disadvantaged pupils?
- What advice does the school provide to the parents of disadvantaged pupils to help them support the learning of their child?
- What facilities or out of hours services does the school provide to allow all children to fully access the curriculum?
- What does your monitoring evidence tell you about the views of the parents of disadvantaged pupils?
- How is transition managed to ensure that sufficient prior information is received about disadvantaged pupils during the process and what use is made of this information?
- How effective are the pastoral and AIG processes within the school in addressing the long-term needs of disadvantage and helping to break down barriers to learning?

Monitor & analyse data	Set clear expectations	Appropriate interventions
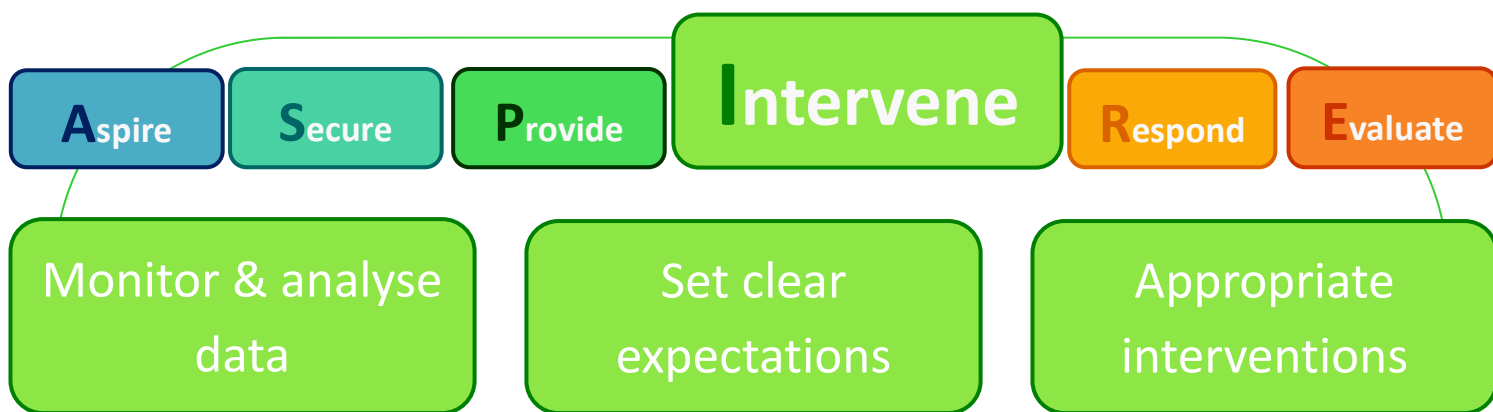
Intervene Overview

- Ensure that data capture systems are rigorous and reliable.
- Regularly collect data and evidence regarding the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Monitor progress of the disadvantaged and intervene quickly if progress stalls.
- Remember that 'keep up' is preferable to 'catch up'.
- Use collected evidence and data to establish intervention requirements and ensure that interventions are carefully targeted to meet the specific needs of the pupil.
- Carefully consider the intended outcomes of an intervention to establish expectations for success.
- Set ambitious and challenging milestones to monitor the impact of interventions.
- Choose evidence-based interventions and regularly evaluate them to maximise the impact and cost effectiveness of the approaches chosen.
- Set a time-limit on interventions and make adaptations to the provision where monitoring identifies that the impact of the intervention is less significant than expected.

Monitor & analyse data

Many disadvantaged pupils place value in the 'here and now', often because they encounter attitudes similar to this at home or within their community. 'Keeping up' is preferable to 'catching up' and falling behind may lead to defensiveness and could have an impact upon levels of resilience and motivation. Such pupils appreciate immediate intervention and find perseverance difficult. Not only do schools need to be aware of this, if they are to raise outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, but they can in fact learn from it. Ongoing and regular monitoring of the impact of interventions is crucial to ensuring their success; whether this be done by tracking the progress of a particular disadvantaged individual, analysing the cost-impact efficacy of an intervention or by identifying further barriers to learning to be addressed in the future. Schools which successfully raise the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils use evidence and data proactively and dynamically rather than reactively and retrospectively, in order to understand the quality of the provision on offer and what needs to be amended and improved. Therefore, they assess the 'here and now' and try to eliminate the gap from the outset rather than allowing the need to 'catch up' to develop. Where their analysis reveals the gap exists 'on entry', they act immediately. This process of monitoring and analysing data leads to effective and efficient spending of funding, which demands pupil progress as a result.

Set clear expectations

Careful analysis and assessment of evidence and data can provide a wealth of knowledge about the needs of the school in terms of raising attainment. From this starting point, decisions can be made about what is required and the direction towards which support needs to be targeted. Furthermore, careful consideration needs to be paid to the intended outcome of any intervention, so that there is a clear and shared understanding of what precisely the intervention will be employed to achieve and how long the intervention will last. This is crucial to ensure that the correct, evidence-based intervention is chosen, and that value for money is achieved. It will also allow clear success criteria to be established and increase confidence that success can be expected. Research suggests that interventions with clear success criteria work better as they allow for careful monitoring and evaluation of their impact. Moreover, lack of clarity regarding the intentions and success criteria of interventions can mean they lose their impact if they: become a 'way of life', rather than being time-limited; are not taught by the right individuals or if they are not specifically targeted at a particular pupil to meet their specific skills or knowledge requirements. Crucially, unless they are carefully managed and conducted at the right time, by the right people, interventions can have a negative impact on pupils' learning over time and on their attitudes toward (and interest in) school and their education. Therefore, it is essential that carefully considered intentions and success criteria are established from the outset of any intervention and that rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the intervention is undertaken, leading to adjustments being made immediately if the desired outcomes are not going to be achieved.

Appropriate interventions

All students, regardless of financial background, benefit from high-quality first teaching. The strategies, routines and pedagogical skill that a quality teacher employs will allow disadvantaged students to thrive and make the required progress to keep up with their more advantaged peers. However, whenever the monitoring and analysis of the full range of available data reveals that progress has stalled, it is crucial that immediate and appropriate intervention is provided. The speed of reaction is vital, especially in the case of the more able disadvantaged pupil, as gaps can develop quickly and lead not only to academic progress dips but also to potentially more damaging changes in the pupils' perception of education and of themselves as learners. Intervention should be carefully targeted with clear success criteria and milestones guiding expectations and needs. The basic principle is that intervention should be implemented to get the pupil 'back on track' as quickly and as painlessly as possible. It is essential to recognise that poorly designed, seemingly never-ending or inappropriately differentiated intervention is as likely to have a further negative impact as a positive one. Beyond that, careful thought needs to be given to who provides the interventions. Research shows that interventions work best when they are delivered by the best teachers. Successful schools are thoughtful and innovative in timetabling and staffing their interventions in order to re-engage, rather than alienate, their disadvantaged pupils.
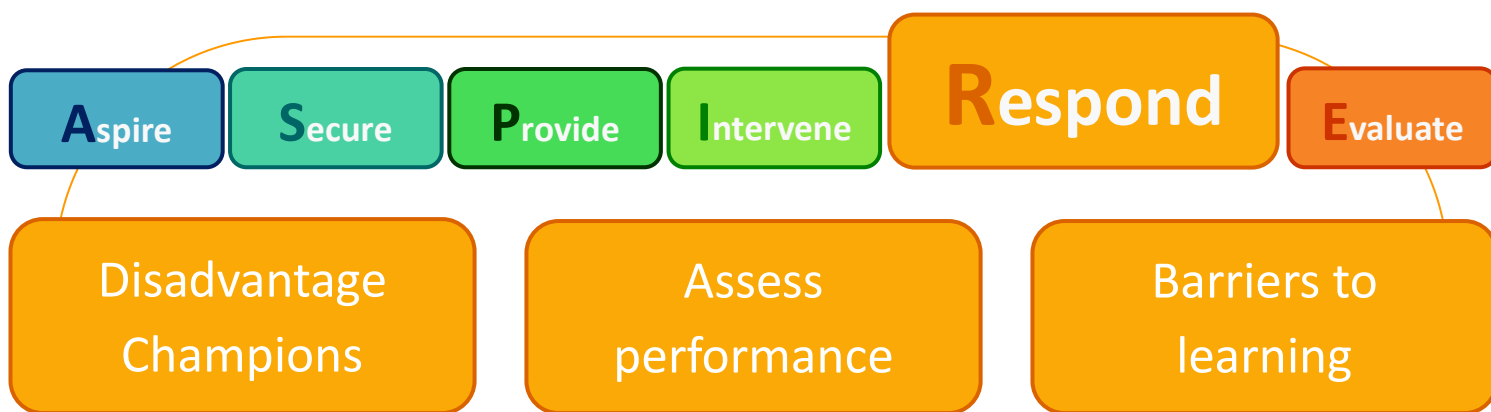
Intervene
Possible approaches

- Ensure disadvantage is a key feature of transition and discuss prior attainment data and successful teaching and leaning strategies.
- Undertake rigorous baseline assessments to assess the quality of prior learning data and set ambitious and aspirational targets.
- Set up rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes of teaching & learning, CPD and interventions.
- Set clear success criteria and milestones and track progress against them.
- Ensure accuracy of assessment and quality of current data through regular moderation and work scrutiny.
- Identify whole school patterns of underachievement, as well as patterns of underachievement for disadvantaged pupils.
- Intervene as soon as progress stalls with 'tried and tested' methods based on evidence-based research.
- Create a disadvantaged 'virtual class' for tracking and monitoring purposes.
- Ensure that the progress of disadvantaged students is measured against all students within the school context and nationally, not just like for like.
- Ensure that the progress of disadvantaged students within the school context is measured against non-disadvantaged students nationally and that this is the principle comparison used.
- Use evidence-based research to guide intervention choices.
- Ensure interventions are time-limited to maximise impact.
- Set ambitious and challenging success criteria based on aspirational targets and attainment data.
- Link interventions to day-to-day teaching.
- Timetable interventions carefully to minimise disruptions to other areas of the curriculum.
- Tailor interventions to the needs of the individual rather than relying on 'best-fit' interventions.
- Ensure that the ability level of the student is taken into account when designing and providing interventions.
- Only use interventions where necessary; don't employ them just because a pupil is disadvantaged; consider whether it is appropriate to intervene.
- Consider external factors which could affect attendance at after-school interventions; consider using funding to arrange for free home-school transportation.
- Use the best teachers to teach disadvantaged pupils and do not deliver interventions as a substitute for high-quality teaching.

Intervene
Diagnostic questions

- What data is made available about the disadvantaged pupils within the school, what use it made of it and how is its quality and robustness ensured?
- What systems are in place to monitor the progress of the disadvantaged?
- What happens when a disadvantaged pupil falls behind?
- How are interventions devised and who runs them?
- What have you learnt about the day-to-day experience of disadvantaged pupils within your school (e.g. by conducting a pupil pursuit) and what has changed as a result?
- How are the quality and level of appropriateness of interventions monitored and assessed?

Aspire	Secure	Provide	Intervene	**R**espond	**E**valuate

Disadvantage Champions	Assess performance	Barriers to learning

Respond Overview

- Responsibility for improving the attainment of the disadvantage should be given to a designated 'Disadvantage Champion' (who sits on SLT) and this should be overseen by a dedicated link governor for disadvantage.

- Progress of disadvantaged pupils should be assessed regularly and the disadvantage champion should ensure that there are rapid responses to identified issues.

- Use data proactively and dynamically, rather than reactively and retrospectively, to enable immediate intervention to take place.

- Determine whether 'on entry' gaps exist and act immediately where any are identified.

- Regularly assess the quality of provision for disadvantaged pupils and amend or improve this, where necessary.

- Ensure close collaboration between disadvantage champions and colleagues, including: class teachers, attendance officers, behaviour managers and SEN coordinators, in order to address identified barriers to learning.

Disadvantage Champions

Raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is the responsibility of every member of staff within every school. It is vitally important, if outcomes are to improve, that staff 'buy in' to this responsibility and recognise the role that they play. Research emphasises that collective responsibility is crucial to drive standards for the disadvantaged upward; however, research also advocates the designation of a 'Disadvantage Champion' within each school—this should be a member of the senior leadership team with overall oversight and ultimate responsibility for ensuring that improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are a priority in the school. Disadvantage Champions play an important role in ensuring that schools are able to respond to need. They research, collaborate and network to produce action plans which are appropriate to the school setting; they monitor, assess and analyse data to ensure that stagnation is identified and interventions are rapidly introduced; they budget and evaluate both the impact of the spending and the impact of interventions. The Disadvantage Champion is the 'go to' person, who ensures consistency across the school and who articulates the school's vision for raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. In the schools which have the most success, the Disadvantage Champion provides credibility and status to the drive for improved outcomes for the disadvantaged, as they have the status within school to make a difference and to hold individuals to account. By doing this, the Disadvantaged Champion plays a vital role in driving up standards of provision for disadvantaged pupils.

Assess performance

Responsiveness to need can only be established by regular assessment of the performance of disadvantaged pupils. Assessment can take a range of forms—including: AFL and formative assessment within lessons (to establish progress against learning outcomes); summative assessment (to test for attainment); findings from learning walks, book scrutinies and similar monitoring activities. The capture of these types of hard and soft data can provide a wealth of information regarding performance. The key to success, however, is what happens to the data which is captured during the assessment process, and how it is used to inform the responses to the needs which are identified as a result. For disadvantaged students, schools responding swiftly to identified gaps in their knowledge or skills is especially important . Immediate intervention, using the 'here and now' to quickly target gaps in knowledge or understanding is inarguably the most effective approach for all pupils. This is especially the case for disadvantaged students, who can lack the resilience and perseverance of their more advantaged peers, and for whom barriers to learning can rapidly lead to deeper deterioration of performance. Regular assessment and analysis of the results, resulting in short-term, targeted intervention or support for learners is the most effective way of ensuring that pupils 'keep up' with their peers to keep the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils as narrow as possible. Furthermore, ensuring that interventions are targeted to address pupils' needs means that they will see the impact of their efforts and there is less likelihood of pupils disengaging from their education.

Barriers to learning

Disadvantaged pupils can face a vast array of barriers to learning, which can negatively impact upon their attainment and progress. Many of these stem directly from financial disadvantage, such as: poor diet and nutrition, affecting health and concentration levels; cramped housing, limiting the availability of 'quiet' areas for the completion of home study and limited access to educational resources (especially books and ICT equipment) outside of school. Disadvantaged children often do not benefit from the same experiences and opportunities as their non-disadvantaged peers, particularly in terms of their ability to access cultural experiences and their encouragement to aspiration. Beyond this, there can be barriers which stem indirectly from financial disadvantage, such as: attitudes of family members, peers and the community, especially in areas where there are generational cycles of unemployment. For example, there may be scepticism towards the value of education and a lack of trust in, or respect for, institutions. In turn, this can lead to low levels of self-esteem and self-confidence, poor attendance levels and issues with behaviour management. The more that a school can compensate for the effects of disadvantage and provide full access to the curriculum, the better the chances of improving outcomes for all. Knowing the barriers to learning of each individual disadvantage circumstance can allow for appropriate responses to be planned and introduced.

Respond

Possible approaches

- Place the focus on raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils, rather than closing the disadvantage gap to eliminate the risk of closing a gap by lowering attainment for the most advantaged. This will also ensure that more able disadvantaged pupils are not overlooked, as their attainment may not be low.

- Investigate the specific barriers to learning which are impacting upon success.

- Research ways to overcome specific barriers to learning and offer CPD to all staff members, where appropriate.

- Don't be frightened to provide the basics, if this helps to overcome a barrier; providing access to breakfast clubs and food, access to IT equipment and writing equipment may be necessary.

- Respond to low parental attendance at Parents Evenings by offering incentives.

- Plan regular data capture weeks during the academic year to allow teachers and the school's Disadvantage Champion to identify stagnation and quickly implement appropriate interventions.

- Use transition data to recognise on-entry gaps and barriers to learning, so that no time is wasted during the first term in a new school or setting.

- Organise inter-departmental/inter-school/cross-phase collaboration sessions to share best practice to allow for the development of a range of interventions for each situation.

- Use allocated funding to organise cultural and aspirational activities for disadvantaged pupils.

- Give Disadvantage Champions the opportunity to recommend Performance Management targets for all staff, based on raising the attainment of disadvantaged students.

- Think creatively and innovatively; responses to need and interventions should be engaging and motivational, encouraging pupils to engage in learning opportunities alongside their peers as much as possible.

- Provide CPD that is focused on improving staff use of AfL techniques and reacting dynamically to assessment.

- Schedule specific monitoring and evaluation timetables, which focus on disadvantaged pupils and provision for them.

- Use findings from monitoring and evaluation to cater for any identified CPD need.

- Ensure that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is a key feature of all reports to governors and that it is given a prominent status within all school and departmental development plans.

- Produce a rigorous, but constantly evolving, disadvantage action plan that is shared with all staff and that feeds into the school and departmental development plan and Performance Management objectives.

Respond

Diagnostic questions

- How are disadvantaged pupils identified by the school and individual class teachers to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged pupils has a high profile?

- Does the school have a Disadvantage Champion, what is their remit and how is their work monitored and evaluated?

- How can the influence and capacity of the Disadvantage Champion be increased?

- Does the school have a dedicated and publicly published policy about how the Pupil Premium Grant will be spent to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils?

- How quickly and effectively are interventions put into place? What impact evidence is available?

- How are the views and needs of parents and pupils taken into account when spending the Pupil Premium Grant and reviewing the impact of this spending?

Aspire	Secure	Provide	Intervene	Respond	**E**valuate

Evaluate! Evaluate! Evaluate!

Evaluate Overview

- Ensure that every intervention is evaluated against agreed success criteria.
- Consider whether value for money is being achieved for each intervention.
- Accept that improvements can always be made and make them where necessary.
- Remember that evaluations are undertaken to establish whether or not interventions are working, rather than to prove that they are.
- Don't be afraid to accept that an intervention is not working.
- A change of approach may create a little more work but is much better than ploughing on regardless.
- Accept that each child is an individual and that what works for one will not necessarily work for another.
- Recognise that there are no 'silver bullets' and that the process of evaluation is essential to establishing disadvantage provision that is successful within the unique school context.

Evaluate!

Rigorous self-evaluation is a vital component of any successful drive to raise standards, and the process should take a three-pronged approach - **evaluation at classroom/ departmental level;** evaluation at SLT level; evaluation at governor level.

Classroom/departmental level: Each individual teacher should be held responsible for the progress of all students that they teach. Teachers should be encouraged to develop a reflective approach to their teaching practice, making effective use of regular opportunities to evaluate the degree to which all pupils are meeting the desired learning outcomes of each lesson. Specific attention should be paid to the needs of disadvantaged pupils, so that teachers can identify and use the most successful approaches to overcoming their barriers to learning and enable these pupils to make good progress. High-quality first teaching should be the school's expectation and should form the basis of the work that schools do to raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils. Where teaching is most effective, teachers evaluate constantly and dynamically amend their teaching approaches, using a range of AfL strategies to identify and respond to pupils who have made limited progress. Where high-quality teaching alone is not enough to ensure that the pupil makes at least expected progress, the effective teacher amends future planning and plans for specific and targeted intervention to address identified gaps in a pupil's learning. The teacher should be involved in monitoring, evaluating, adapting and analysing the impact of interventions on pupils that they teach.

Evaluate!

Rigorous self-evaluation is a vital component of any successful drive to raise standards, and the process should take a three-pronged approach - evaluation at classroom/ departmental level; **evaluation at SLT level;** evaluation at governor level.

SLT level: Where evaluative systems are most successful in helping to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, a process of 'holding to account' is established and the school's SLT play a vital role in this. They establish the monitoring systems which are used within the school and they dictate the regularity of data collection, as well as assuring the quality and reliability of the data provided. Using this information, a member of SLT (possibly the 'Disadvantage Champion') should conduct evaluative discussions with teachers (or other accountable members of staff) which incisively and directly determine the efficacy and impact of specific approaches or interventions in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Questioning should initially focus on the impact of interventions, actions or approaches, with further questioning then unpicking the underlying reasons for the positive or negative impact. As a result of these discussions, ineffective interventions must be improved or replaced. It is essential that the SLT models and develops the whole-school understanding that there is no 'silver bullet' which will raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and, as a result, many actions, interventions and approaches will be tried, tested and amended to ensure that the school meets the changing needs of their disadvantaged pupils. Creating a 'no blame' culture is an important aspect of developing positive working relationships in the school, within which staff are able to ask demanding questions of themselves and of the work that they do to raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils. This - alongside high-quality leadership and effective action planning - will enable the school to foster an ethos of collective responsibility for rigorously evaluating and continuously improving the impact of the work done to improve the provision for disadvantaged pupils.

Evaluate!

Rigorous self-evaluation is a vital component of any successful drive to raise standards, and the process should take a three-pronged approach - evaluation at classroom/ departmental level; evaluation at SLT level; **evaluation at governor level**.

Governor level: Just as the role of the designated 'Disadvantage Champion' within a school is recognised as a vital component in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, research also suggests that having a designated 'Disadvantage Governor' can increase the effectiveness and success of provision for disadvantaged pupils further. In a similar way to the school's SLT holding individual teachers to account for the progress of the disadvantaged pupils that they teach, the role of the Disadvantage Governor would be to hold the SLT to account. The 'Disadvantage Governor' takes responsibility for ensuring that appropriately incisive evaluative questions are asked of the Disadvantage Champion/SLT. As well as questioning the SLT about the specific impact of the Pupil Premium Grant spending, the 'Disadvantage Governor' should unpick the cost-impact analysis of the spending of the PPG to ensure that it is being used efficiently and effectively to raise standards for disadvantaged pupils. The 'Disadvantage Governor' should provide support and challenge to the SLT ensure that the work that is being done by the school is having a significant enough positive impact on the academic outcomes for disadvantaged pupils within the school.

Evaluate
Possible approaches

- Value the quality and impact of evaluations.
- Ensure that every member of staff within the school is aware of who the disadvantaged pupils are and of their responsibilities in ensuring positive outcomes for them.
- Hold regular pupil progress meetings, making the progress of disadvantaged pupils a key focus within them, in order to ensure that teaching is meeting the needs of these individuals.
- Provide CPD on methods of assessment to ensure that teachers fully understand what good levels of progress look like for all students and can react accordingly in situations where such progress is not made.
- Agree timescales, specific success criteria and associated milestones for any intervention and hold regular intervention meetings/discussions to evaluate progress against these success criteria and milestones.
- Involve all staff in evaluating and adapting the school's policies and procedures to ensure that they best meet the needs of the children taught.
- Embed peer-to-peer coaching, observations and discussions as tools to promote an evaluative and reflective staff team, who are open to feedback and are constantly striving to improve the whole-school provision for disadvantaged pupils.
- Ensure regular data collection and track data for disadvantaged pupils, ensuring that any dips in progress or attainment for these pupils are noticed and promptly responded to.
- Designate a member of SLT as 'Disadvantage Champion' to pay particular attention to the experiences and needs of the disadvantaged pupils within the school.
- Undertake a range of monitoring activities that focus on evaluating the impact of experiences of disadvantaged pupils, organised and co-ordinated by the Disadvantage Champion.
- Provide regular reports to governors accounting for the spending of the PPG and evaluating the resulting impact.
- Ask heads of department/curriculum/pastoral areas to present to governors on the progress of disadvantaged students and the impact of any interventions introduced.
- Designate a member of the governing body as 'Disadvantage Governor' to pay particular attention to the way the school provides for disadvantaged pupils.
- Ensure that the progress of disadvantaged pupils forms an integral part of line management/PM discussions.

Evaluate
Diagnostic questions

- How regularly does self-evaluation, focused of the progress of and provision for disadvantaged pupils, take place within a classroom, departmental and/or whole-school context?
- How actively are governors involved in raising attainment of disadvantaged pupils and how do they hold the school to account over provision for the disadvantaged?
- What is the process for evaluating the quality of interventions?
- How effectively is the Pupil Premium Grant spent within the school, how regularly is spending evaluated and by whom, and what happens if spending or aspects of spending are deemed to be ineffective?

A S P I R E

to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils

Further Reading & Acknowledgments

The following research was used to form the basis of this document and would be a good starting point for anyone wanting to deepen their understanding of disadvantage or the Pupil Premium Grant.

- *Breaking the link between disadvantage and low attainment*—Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009
- *Pockets of Poverty: The challenge for schools with small proportions of FSM pupils*—Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010
- *Effective classroom strategies for closing the gap in educational achievement for children and young people living in poverty, including white working-class boys* - C4EO: Schools and Communities Research Review 4, 2011
- *Toolkit of strategies to improve learning—summary for schools, spending the Pupil Premium*—The Sutton Trust, 2012
- *The Pupil Premium*—Ofsted, 2012
- *The Pupil Premium: How schools are spending the funding to maximise achievement*—Ofsted, 2013
- *Pupil Premium and the invisible group*—FFT, 2014

Glossary

Within this document there are a number of acronyms or pieces of specific terminology used. The definitions below are intended to clarify meaning.

CLA—Child Looked After. Relates to any child who has been placed within Local Authority care for a period of one day or more.

CPD—Continuing Professional Development.

FSM6—Free School Meals Ever 6. Relates to any child who has been entitled to free schools meals at any time during the past 6 years.

FFT50— 50th percentile progress; i.e average progress according to Fischer Family Trust estimates.

Meta-cognition— Active control over the learning process.

Post-LAC — Refers to any child who has no left Local Authority care due to adoption, special guardianship, child arrangement order or residence order.

PPG—Pupil Premium Grant (see page 3 for explanation of current values).