

### Disadvantaged Strategy

#### Essex context:

In Essex the performance of disadvantaged pupils is lower when compared to their more fortunate peers. Approximately half of Early Years' disadvantaged pupils achieve a Good Level of Development in the past three years. The gap increases over time so that by the age of 16, it has almost doubled from pupils' original starting points at the age of 5. On average 20% of disadvantaged pupils have SEND. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are White British boys is higher in Essex than nationally. Attainment and progress of this pupil group, at both KS2 and KS4, is among the lowest of any gender/ethnic group mix but make up the largest group in size.

The absence rate among disadvantaged pupils is around twice that of non-disadvantaged pupils with the exclusion rate being around four times as high. There is a geographical diversity across the county with over a third of pupils in the Tendring and Basildon districts living in the most 20% of deprived areas in the country.

The proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium is not always an accurate representation of disadvantage in the community. Conversely, immediate perceptions of the local community may not be representative of the levels of disadvantage at the school. Levels may fluctuate as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects.

#### **Purpose of this strategy – Maximising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Essex**

- Building on national expertise and best practice to develop a sustainable approach to tackling educational disadvantage
- Consistency of knowledge and expertise within LA team – a consistent language, high quality challenge and support to schools and settings
- Better educational experiences and improved long-term outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
- To begin exploration of the links between disadvantage and SEND and the use of school resources to support the most vulnerable
- Develop partnership working to use the expertise within the specialist sector (enhanced provisions and special schools) as well as best practice within the mainstream sector
- To develop skills within the early years sector to ensure early identification and support
- To keep schools and settings up to date with relevant information and guidance on pupil premium

**Intended impact:**

- ▶ To improve confidence in schools to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils
- ▶ To deliver high quality support and challenge for schools and settings in removing barriers to achievement at a strategic level
- ▶ To accelerate progress for disadvantaged pupils (inc. PPG pupils), improve readiness to learn, develop personal and cultural capital and develop self-efficacy.
- ▶

**Impact measures:**

- ▶ Intended impact in 12 months (Autumn 21): (1) secure schools/settings understanding of the needs of their specific cohort, development plans identify a clear drive to improve outcomes for this cohort. (2) Schools/settings and partnerships can articulate their plan, the intended provision, impact and how evaluation and monitoring will occur. (3) Best practice is shared as a regular agenda item within partnerships. (4) SEP's are secure in their understanding of how to support schools/settings with best practice in raising outcomes for disadvantaged pupils using a suite of tools. (5) Development of early years specific tools where necessary.
- ▶ Intended impact in 24 months (Autumn 22): (1) Schools and settings data identifies improved outcomes overall with an identified improvement in outcomes for their disadvantaged cohort. (2) schools/settings knowledge is embedded and widely shared with a continual cycles of monitoring and evaluation (3) An annual cycle of support for new and existing school/setting staff is in place to embed best practice and learn from each other.
- ▶ Embed a vulnerable learners element within the overall education strategy, bringing together work on disadvantaged, LAC, lowest 20%, life without labels and SEND.

**Progress to date and any impact:**

- Improved knowledge of SEPs
- Improved confidence of SEPs to have conversations with schools and settings regarding disadvantaged outcomes and provision
- Development of disadvantaged clinics
- Increase in conversations regarding disadvantaged learners raising the profile within the directorate
- Engagement with pilot schools that had their review
- Development of the draft strategy
- Analysis of data to more fully understand the Essex context
- Marc Rowlands training and support drawing on national best practice
- Links made with EEF to support with training and funding in Tendring
- Development of pilot package of support in Tendring inc. Inclusion Framework and TPP– HEP and CCA to be approached

## **Our findings from the pilot school visits:**

We have worked with our pilot schools to help develop our strategy for disadvantaged pupils in Essex. Global events have made this work more important than ever. Each school's strategy should focus on the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on *learning* and focus relentlessly on addressing this. Ensuring a common understanding of the strategy across the school community is key to success.

Schools should develop a long-term approach, focussed on the needs of their pupils. It should include a clear evaluation framework and progression model. It is important to clarify the ultimate goal within the approach, and to be clear about whether short, medium and long term improvements are being made that work to achieve that goal.

Our work has highlighted four core elements to focus on, mirroring national research. The interrelated elements are:

- Relationships
- Meta-cognition and self-regulated learning
- Social and emotional / mental health
- Language development / comprehension

The bedrock on which all other elements need to be established is relationships. We are particularly mindful of how schools should maintain and develop relationships as the foundation for learning. We need to carefully consider the process of transition for our disadvantaged pupils and they develop new relationships. Inclusivity and effective communication with pupils and families is paramount to success.

Our plan also focuses on the establishment of evidence based practice for meta-cognition and self-regulated learning, SEMH, language development and comprehension. Activity should be driven by robust assessment of need, not labels or assumptions. Where learning focuses on these elements, alongside the development of knowledge, we see good outcomes for all, irrespective of background.

Our plan looks to develop a model of shared understanding, where a culture is developed that embodies the view that education has a powerful role to play in the improvement of life chances, irrespective of socio-economic background. It should be developed by the whole school community to adopt an evidence informed strategy that focusses on the issues that matter. It prioritises accountability to pupils and families first. Success is measured by its impact on pupils, not on institutions. Together, it is possible to develop a culture of purpose, positivity and regular reflection that leads to positive change for all. We know this from the work in our schools.

**Next steps:**

Launch of the strategy Jan 21 through partnerships

Development of disadvantaged champions at SLT level within schools, support from Marc to develop practise, through partnerships

Start of Tending specific package of support – likely to be HEP (Harwich Education Partnership) and CCA

Session with governors – Oct 20

Evaluation of strategy from a Early Years perspective

Training of IP's and EP's so that our work is embedded across the quadrants with all roles that work with our vulnerable learners

Autumn 2021 and Autumn 2022 conference for schools and settings to refresh learning and continue to embed best practise based on current national research