

Culture, Creativity and Narrowing the Gap – using pupil premium to enrich cultural education

Stoke Newington School is a secondary school situated in the London Borough of Hackney. The school intake is 1618 with 484 (30%) students eligible for pupil premium funding. The London average of secondary school pupils eligible for pupil premium in 2016–17 is 39.7%. The school has a Good Ofsted rating and a Progress 8 score of 0.3 which is above national average within the top 25% of schools. In 2016 the school received the Arts Mark Platinum after four consecutive years of achieving the Artsmark Gold Award.

Key insights

- The importance of cultural and arts opportunities to support the wider learning of pupil premium students. Schools can have a role in enhancing cultural capital to remove barriers to accessing and understanding the wider curriculum.
- A wide range of data can be monitored and reviewed to understand the impact of pupil premium funding. Outcome indicators should include assessment outcomes and behavioural and attitudinal data from staff observations and student voice.

CASE STUDY

Stoke Newington School

How does the school aim to support disadvantaged pupils?

The school's pupil premium strategy sets out an aim to ensure excellent progress and development for all students. The school understands that there is an imbalance in access to resources for students who are from disadvantaged lower income backgrounds. The aim of its use of pupil premium is to reduce the gap in access to opportunities so that disadvantaged students achieve at the same progress as other students nationally.

An overarching strategy and budget is devised and agreed by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, senior leadership team (SLT) and governors. The strategy has been developed by looking at the specific needs of students, reviewing attainment progress data and aligning with the areas the school wants to focus on in their school improvement plan. The school also looks at research via the Education Endowment Trust and Sutton Trust to assess which intervention strategies have the biggest impact on narrowing the gap between pupil premium and non-pupil premium students.

"I make sure I look to the Sutton Trust and Educational Endowment Fund to see different strategies they recommend. To make sure we are covering the best and highest impacts strategies to implement. I do that in collaboration with other departments".
Deputy Headteacher, Stoke Newington School

20% of pupil premium funding is spent on specific individual support including: English and Maths interventions to support literacy and numeracy needs; access to resources and equipment: improved cultural capital development and aspirational activities; additional tutoring for non-core subjects; and staff allocated to supporting students in homework club. The remaining 80% is spent on ensuring smaller class sizes and the recruitment of additional teachers.

Teachers can bid for a proportion of the funding for individual support if they propose an activity that is in line with the aims of the strategy. Proposals must set out which selected pupil premium students will benefit and the intended outcomes/benefits. Bids are made at the end of each summer term and approved by the Deputy Headteacher who is the overall budget holder of pupil premium.

How is narrowing the gap strategy aligned with providing access to arts and cultural opportunities for disadvantaged students?

Stoke Newington school has a longstanding ethos of providing an inclusive and creative learning environment. More recently the school have focused on enhancing student cultural capital within the school. The development of a cultural capital programme has been led by the Assistant Headteacher. He observed differences in access to cultural opportunities which were impacting on understanding of the curriculum and contributing to the gap in learning outcomes.

"I had felt for a number of years that issues around cultural capital was not being explored in terms of students learning and access to the curriculum... when students arrive in year 7 you have these inequalities based on their life experiences built into their learning".
Assistant Headteacher, Stoke Newington School

In his view, there had been scepticism within the wider teaching community about prioritising the development of cultural capital within schools. In response to a climate of increased marginalisation of the arts in education, he developed a discussion paper to convince the SLT and governors that the school needed to have more of a direct impact on addressing the differences in students access to such cultural enrichment opportunities.

The cultural capital approach was implemented for the first time in 2016/17. The school agreed a commitment to this but under the condition that its implementation and delivery would be at a low cost and sustainable in an environment of school constricted budgets. The main factor in driving this support was the importance of closing the gap that students may experience in understanding and benefiting from the standard school curriculum due to different levels of cultural awareness. It was recognised that often teachers and examination boards make references to things that pupil premium students may have not seen and experienced and it is important that all children have an understanding and awareness of these cultural frameworks.

"Where we notice the difference with our non-pupil premium students that do really well, is that they are able to articulate about lots of different things they've done, where they've been, what they've seen and what they understand from that. You can see how that is reflected in their work as well because of their ability to articulate that. Unless students are able to have those experiences and call on those terms of references about different places they've been they are more of a disadvantage because they are unable to talk or write about them. It can be difficult to put into context how much impact it has but we want those pupil premium students to have those experiences too, if not at home, at school".
Deputy Headteacher, Stoke Newington School

The school's commitment to supporting greater opportunities to develop cultural capital within school has aligned with the school's wider strategy in narrowing the gap for disadvantaged students. Funding specific activities were incorporated within the pupil premium budget for 2016/17 with 2.2% (£10,000) allocated to improve cultural capital for pupil premium students.



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Pupil premium is spent on supporting KS3 students to access cultural enrichment days twice a year. The days are free and accessible to all students and aim to widen their knowledge and access to cultural experiences. Attendance so far has been near to 100% attendance. The school has engaged with 5 cultural and arts organisations based in London: The National Gallery; The Tate Modern; Greenwich Museums; The RAF museum; and Kew Gardens. These were largely new relationships, with the school investing time in researching and approaching a variety of organisations that they felt would provide a good range of cultural opportunities. The school selected organisations that were open to discussing the specific needs of the school and could provide the capacity to support and accommodate the students on the day. Some of the organisations offered specific opportunities for the students including facilitated activities and presentations by curators. The school also ensured each visit was structured by providing tailored activity sheets to support learning throughout the visit. The school hoped this would be the start of an ongoing relationship which would continue next academic year. Additionally, academic trips organised by subject departments attended by at least 40% of pupil premium students are subsidised by 50% for these students to ensure all young people have



40% of pupil premium students are subsidised by 50% for academic trips

access to trips to support and enhance their access to the curriculum.

The visits allow disadvantaged students to explore cultural organisations and experiences in London that they may have not previously accessed. Another benefit is that student engagement is increased by contextualising the curriculum with real life examples. Students can also broaden their cultural knowledge and comprehension of the curriculum.

"What's important is having access to cultural things that are tangible and visible rather than [access to] just to a textbook. They then have comprehension of the knowledge they learn in science if they go to the science museum or things that they now know in drama from going to the theatre. It is alive and becomes much more visceral. They can potentially engage with this more easily and then bring that comprehension and understanding back to the classroom and translate it into their work".
Creative Arts Leader, Stoke Newington School

Staff have observed students discuss how the experience has enabled them to learn new things, challenge previous preconceptions of art and culture and widen their experiences of travel in London. Staff found that pupils could also socialise with other pupils they do not meet through regular lessons and develop new relationships with other teachers.

A group of year 9 students, who had attended a trip to the Tate Modern discussed gaining a broader overall understanding of art including an awareness of the depth and range of work that was included in the gallery and the meanings behind the artists' pieces. The students were also surprised that participation had been offered to the whole year and not just to those who were interested and studying art.

"I thought art was that you draw something nice, but I've now learnt it can be how you express your emotions".
Pupil, Stoke Newington School

"Some of the painting were more basic than I thought they would be but there was more behind it when you read the words with it".
Pupil, Stoke Newington School

Evaluation, monitoring and reporting

Pupil premium is reviewed every year. Attainment progress of pupil premium students is compared with non-pupil premium students at a national level. Three times a year the school has progress checks monitoring internal and external assessment. The school keep a record of any interventions provided to pupil premium students and review their impact in line with the results of progress checks. The success of pupil premium activities is also reviewed against feedback from student voice and internal behaviour indicators. It was felt that a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data across assessment, behavioural and attitudinal indicators needed to be reviewed to truly understand the impact interventions were having.

“An important thing for me is that they are making progress as a person as well as making progress in their academic results. Have we seen a difference in their attitude and learning? That is something that is quite difficult to evaluate but we can review it through pupil voice, the change in the student attitudes and how they are around school”.

Deputy Headteacher, Stoke Newington School

The data is then reviewed by governors once a term who scrutinise the evidence of how pupil premium students are performing, what strategies the school is employing to close the gaps in attainment and how well the budget has been spent.

Currently there are no outcome indicators attached to the activities funded via pupil premium to improve cultural capital. The school has collected early feedback via student voice questionnaires. So far, they have found engagement has varied depending on individual interest. However, the school feels it is too early to understand the full outcome from the activities. The long-term goal is to widen students' broader cultural experience and knowledge over the complete course of their experience of school and embed inclusive opportunities within the culture and ethos of the school.

“I couldn't really say what the impact has been so far. I think it's about embedding it in the culture. The feedback from staff have been good. There have been positive things like kids getting excited about things that we take for granted like the journey getting there and not knowing the history of Kew gardens”.

Assistant Headteacher, Stoke Newington School

After the first year of implementation, they may attach key performance indicators to the cultural engagement activities and measure against student voice and staff perceptions of the value of the experience for students.

Key learning for the future

Assistant Headteacher, Alan MacAskill would like to further expand the cultural enrichment programme to include a range of activities and experiences that all students should have across their time at the school no matter their background, for example – seeing a live performance, being part of a live performance and showing their work to an audience. He feels the existing opportunities are a starting point to build a complete set of cultural experiences that students can take away from school.

“Long term I hope it will set a view of the culture of the school and the expectation of what we want all children to have which is more than just being academically successful, there is that element of being a happy well-rounded individual which can get lost in some schools”.

Assistant Headteacher, Stoke Newington School

Deputy Headteacher, Mark Bynoe also discussed the need to try and strengthen the mechanism they have to monitor outcomes of pupil premium funding. The school is working towards enhancing the data they get from student voice and are considering adding further questions on what students think has supported them most to help further distinguish the impacts of multiple interventions.

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