**The building blocks of success in schools where disadvantaged pupils have high achievement**

[June 8, 2016](https://johndunfordconsulting.co.uk/2016/06/08/the-building-blocks-of-success-in-schools-where-disadvantaged-pupils-have-high-achievement/) / [drjohndunford](https://johndunfordconsulting.co.uk/author/drjohndunford/)

Bringing together the conclusions from the NFER report on pupil premium of 2015, the Ofsted survey report of 2013 and the August 2015 blog from my two years as national pupil premium champion, (references to these three documents at the end), I have listed the building blocks of success in schools where disadvantaged pupils are doing well.

These provide a good guide on which to base school strategy for raising the attainment of disadvantaged young people and closing the gap. The points could be used as a checklist of current practice.

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

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

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

References:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-pupil-premium-how-schools-are-spending-the-funding-successfully>;  
<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PUPP01>;  
<https://johndunfordconsulting.co.uk/blog/>