# What are the most effective ways to support disadvantaged pupils' achievement?

SirThomas Wharton Academy's approach to the seven building blocks identified by NFER research, which leads to success in raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils:

1. Whole-school ethos of attainment for all:
- Our mission statement clearly reflects our approach to all children's learning and is clear about how we ensure the growth of the whole child.
- Expectations are high for all students and are supported by our PRIDE agenda.
- Challenge for all is a key priority in the classroom and in staff training.
- All staff are aware of the Pupil Premium and other Disadvantaged students and put clear interventions in place when needed.
- There is a belief that we are all learners at Sir Thomas Wharton Academy and that we can all improve. This is evidenced in the Open Classroom culture, in the ongoing professional development opportunities taken up by staff and the willingness of students to continually strive to improve.
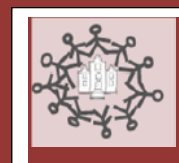
2. Addressing behaviour and attendance:
- Our behavior for learning policy ensures consistency in managing and rewarding student choices.
- Our PRIDE and PLEDGES agenda enables our students to understand the expectations of the Academy and their responsibility within it.
- Attendance is a priority for all and student proximity to the 96% target is tracked and rewarded half-termly. Support and intervention is offered quickly to those experiencing barriers and Pupil Premuim students are targeted first. Rigorous weekly monitoring is used to show impact of attendance initiatives.
- Effective collaboration and relationships with external agencies ensure an effective and graduated response bespoke to need.
- Our commitment to social mobility and ensuring most disadvantaged students are given every opportunity to succeed via priority monitoring of those students.

3. High quality teaching for all:
- A strong belief in Quality First Teaching for all underpins our strategy. All teaching is judged as effective or better based on typicality and using the triangulation method; those falling below expectation are supported.
- Rigorous and systematic quality assurance cycles are standardised to ensure consistency of feedback to drive improvement.
- Teachers set high expectations based around the PRIDE agenda.
- The Academy's approach is driven by extensive research into strategies that impact on learning, such as prep learning, SPA and CTG methods of assessment so that students learn HOW to improve their work in order to make progress.
- Teacher judgements are standardized and moderated across the Trust and beyond to ensure accuracy.
- Teacher Live Files are used to support teacher planning for questioning to ensure all students are challenged appropriately.
- Students are very aware of the bigger picture through meticulous organisation of books and learning portfolios.
- A whole school training calendar reflects national research and the sharing of good practice through a culture of open classrooms, voluntary training sessions bespoke to identified need and high quality INSET.
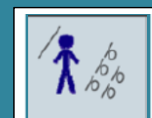
4. Meeting individual learning Needs:

- The Introduction of Progress Tests in term 1 of Year 7 has allowed us to identify gaps in attainment and progress so that individual support can be put in place during and outside curriculum time to catch up early.
- KS4 live trials are analysed in depth and question level analysis is used to inform targeted Intervention both within and outside of curriculum time.
- Year 11 Independent Learning Portfolios are used in form time so that students develop their independent learning skills.
- Our team of 4 Students Welfare Managers and 2 Lead Pastoral staff work closely with external agencies to provide specialist support for those children with additional needs. This knowledge of the students feeds into the Raising Achievement Meetings.
- More vulnerable disadvantaged and SEND students have access to additional provisions in the Hub area during form, targeted lessons and unstructured time.

5. Deploying staff effectively:

- All teachers and teaching assistants receive highly detailed feedback on their strengths and share good practice in a highly structured way so that staff know how to get support they need to improve their practice. Their strengths are built upon and utilized to continually raise standards.
- Staff who have particular strengths in working with low ability sets are deployed there whilst those with strengths in supporting those with lower aspirations are deployed there. Smaller group sizes enable a focus on disadvantaged students particularly in KS4.
- Highly skilled teachers and support staff are given autonomy to run our Alternative Provision centre for the most vulnerable Year 10 and 11 students to give them the opportunity to gain a full suite of qualifcations while developing other skills needed to be successful in the wider community.
- Teaching Assistants are well trained to provide effective support and are held to account for their performance. Some are trained in specific learning interventions
- Teachers have detailed support plans in their live files evidencing teamwork with teaching assistants.
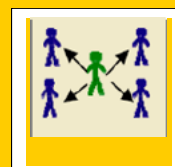
6. Data driven and responding to evidence:

- 4 Matrix and FFT live are used to track and analyse student performance at each learning cycle. This analysis feeds in to the Whole Academy and Subject Development plans to inform rapid improvement strategies. This allows monitoring of specific vulnerable groups to identify priorities quickly at school, cohort and individual level including access to alternative provision or targeted support.
- Raising Achievement meetings are held half-termly to ensure students are making expected progress or better with specific focus on disadvantaged students. Tracking is linked to other vulnerability ratings as well as progress indicators.
- All teachers engage with the data themselves as all classes in every subject have a live file updated on each data capture by teachers so they can target specific students and group interventions related to assessment objectives.
- Regular standardisation and moderation of assessment marking ensures that data on the system is accurate and reliable so teachers and Subject Leaders can identify the gaps and next steps in learning.
- A comprehensive picture of any New Year 7 cohorts is gathered prior to transfer by regular visits and dialogue with the Primary feeder schools and opportunities for Disadvantaged students to spend quality time at the Academy prior to transfer.

7. Clear, responsive leadership:

- A clear Pupil Premium Action plan is in place and linked directly to the Academy Development Plan. The use of funding is outlined clearly; this is tracked and monitored regularly to show impact.
- Governors have high expectations and hold the Associate Principal and staff to account for Pupil premium performance through the half-termly governor report and the Raising Achievement Committee. The Chair of Governors himself is the Lead governor for both Pupil Premium and SEND.
- SLT lead by example by supporting and modelling high standards and best practice.
- All staff are held to account for student performance through a rigorous appraisal process and the triangulation of regular learning walks, work scrutinies and student voice.
- All staff are trained to give high quality feedback to students and all leaders give high quality feedback to staff.
- High quality opportunities for professional development through in house training, external agencies and across the Trust is a priority including an in house Middle leadership development programme that is linked to the national NPQML .
- Links with Doncaster Opportunity Area initiatives has brought in additional funding to support the leadership of Reciprocal reading and Careers provision in order to raise aspirations further while also offering opportunity for peer review with other Secondary Academies to share good practice.
- The Vice Principal meets monthly with the parent forum and uses the high quality feedback to inform school improvement
- The Student voice are very proactive in school improvement priorities and there are many opportunities for the development of student leaders through the student council.
- As a Trust we are constantly seeking out new ideas and put systems in place to share good practice.