

Pupil Premium Strategy 20/21

At the heart of our strategy is the focus on ensuring best possible outcomes for our disadvantaged students. We want to concentrate our efforts on the aspects teachers and school leaders can have most impact on. We are focusing our efforts on delivering high quality teaching in the classroom and relentless accountability at student, teacher and all leadership levels.

The table below lists our spending plan for the academic year 2020/ 21, while the following will outline our underpinning rationale which is informed by current research, especially findings published by the EEF.

1. Planning and teaching of a mastery focused, knowledge rich curriculum

Our whole school focus on mastery through knowledge-rich curricula has resulted in lean learning journeys where content is planned and delivered in line with current research in the science of learning considering cognitive load and direct instruction. Learning episodes are structured around 'I do, we do, you do', with an emphasis on oracy and meta cognition.

Teachers plan for opportunities for students to discuss their learning, i.e. through pair-and-share when acquiring new knowledge. Feedback aims to be timely and habit-changing. Teachers are using exit tickets for students to improve and deepen their understanding in very short time frames, thus reflecting on their learning within each learning episode.

Our mastery approach means that most groups move through the syllabus at roughly the same pace. Faster grasping students are offered opportunities for depths while slower progressing students are offered fluency to ensure adequate understanding. Learning journeys have built-in opportunities for students to recall previous knowledge and to connect new knowledge to previous knowledge, thus forming stronger connections within their long-term memory.

Our disadvantaged students who potentially experience more disruptive home lives will disproportionately benefit from our cognitive load friendly, mastery focused, feedback rich approach where teachers are encouraging rich discussion and reflections on their learning.

2. Accountability on all levels

We know that students will make best progress when held relentlessly to account. Departments have translated their lean learning journeys into mastery maps which allow consistent teaching of knowledge and skills needed to progress. Formative strategies focus on frequent checking of understanding (i.e. use of mini whiteboards, questioning), while exit tickets offer reflection points for teachers and students alike.

These work-load friendly mastery maps allow teachers and curriculum leaders to monitor student progress across all subject groups to identify gaps of understanding well in advance of traditional data drops. Intervention therefore can happen immediately, discretely and without interruption the planning learning journey. Where possible, flexible grouping will offer additional support, however – in line with current EEF guidance – any small group work is planned alongside subject teachers and follows the intended curriculum learning.

Curriculum Leaders work closely with newly appointed Heads of Year. Both sets of middle leaders focus on student progress and share a common understanding of our rationale of high-quality teaching and accountability. Joint training and collaboration is building as shared language of how we will enable all of students to achieve their potential and how ensure best outcomes. While all students will benefit from this joint approach, our disadvantaged students will disproportionately benefit from such a comprehensive set of advocates.

3. Alternative Provision

Aldworth School is fortunate to have generous facilities. We have therefore made the decision to offer some of our most vulnerable students an alternative provision while remaining on school site and part of the school community.

While this group is currently very small, the opportunity costs arising from this superficially expensive-looking project are expected to be substantive. First and foremost, providing a bespoke education, delivered by experienced subject specialists who are adapting existing learning journeys, undoubtedly benefits our most vulnerable students directly.

These students have found attending mainstream lessons difficult and have often expressed their frustration through disruptive behaviour. Instead of a traditional transfer to a pupil referral unit, we are now able to retain our students within our school community. In turn, the elimination of disruptive behaviour has benefited all students, disproportionately so for our remaining disadvantaged students.

With regard to developing our teaching provision, staff working both within our internal unit and mainstream gain invaluable insight in how to best structure and atomise instructions and tasks for students who find learning challenging. We firmly believe that all students can learn and progress given adequate surroundings and instructions and we are already seeing the mutual benefits of having our unit on site, both in terms of planning for access for all and ensuring that all of our students feel and know that they belong to Aldworth School.