

Better Outcomes, Better Lives

Brighton & Hove's Strategy for Tackling Educational Disadvantage

January 2022 – September 2025

Executive Summary

Brighton and Hove Local Authority has high aspirations for every pupil in the City because this is directly linked to better life outcomes. We are proud that attainment is high and a large percentage of our schools have been judged good or better by Ofsted. However, we need to redouble our efforts to support and champion pupils who are disadvantaged, ensuring that we are listening to them. These pupils are not achieving in line with the national average on most measures despite our long-term commitment and targeted support. This is a city-wide issue, however there are particular communities where poverty consistently has a greater impact on educational outcomes, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Now is the time to rethink how our LA and schools addresses this issue ensuring that we build on our successes. We are determined that every pupil in our City who is disadvantaged is encouraged and supported to achieve their academic potential and will leave school or college with a positive relationship with education and that disadvantaged pupils achieve the best possible outcomes.

Definition of Disadvantage

The Department of Education have an official definition of a disadvantaged pupil and state-funded schools receive Pupil Premium funding to raise their attainment which is used in this strategy. We acknowledge that the Government's definition of disadvantage does not capture all pupils who may be classed as experiencing vulnerability and may be disadvantaged in another sense and this definition is broadened by individual schools to meet individual circumstances.

Rationale

Currently, the data collected from exam results indicates that, on average, disadvantaged pupils in Brighton and Hove do not do as well academically as disadvantaged pupils elsewhere in the country. This is due to a range of local contextual factors, for example the higher rates of involvement with social care, the level of SEND need within this group and the low attendance figures. There is a significant difference in how pupils perform in exams at the end of secondary school depending on where pupils live in the city, with pupils from our more deprived neighbourhoods achieving significantly lower grades on average.

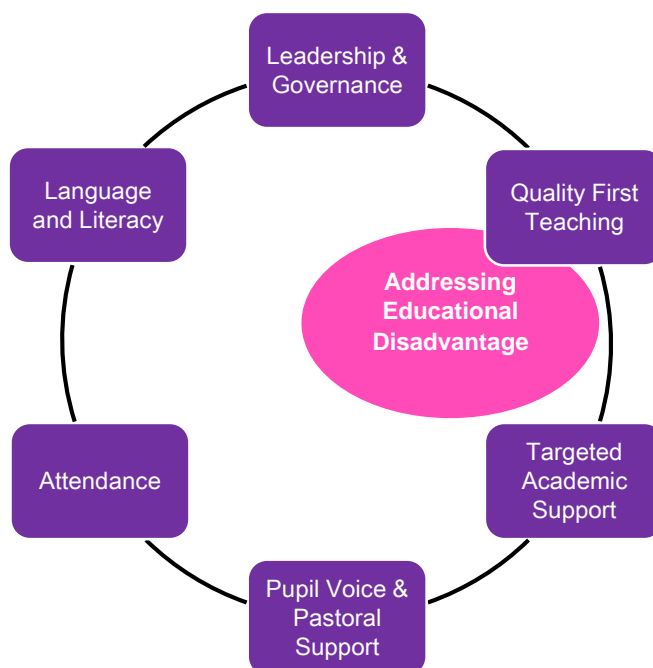
Our Existing Approach

Schools and the Local Authority have worked in partnership for many years to address this issue, with some successes, although there is clearly much more to do. Programs which have supported disadvantaged pupils include council funded teacher training programs, reviews of school provision for disadvantaged pupils and audits of the impact of schools for children living in poverty. Much has been done during the pandemic to support vulnerable communities, for example delivering digital devices, providing internet access and support to enable pupils to access home learning.

Our Approach Moving Forward

We have used evidence-based research to identify six key themes which affect the attainment and progress gap. These are not stand-alone, but provide a framework for improving the outcomes of pupils who are disadvantaged. These themes allow for our schools to address both existing inequalities and issues caused by the pandemic.

We recognise the need for school leaders and teachers to collaborate within and across schools and to allow time for reflection on the learning from the pandemic. Therefore, we have set a clear objective under each theme which will remain constant, but the actions connected to each objective will be reviewed and updated through consultation with stakeholders. Educational professionals will meet and implement the action plan for each theme.



Leadership and Governance

This theme focuses on developing the strategic leadership of education of disadvantaged pupils.

The objective will be to ensure that educational standards will be driven up, so nearly all schools are rated good or better by Ofsted and all schools are committed to supporting the outcomes for our disadvantaged pupils.

Quality First Teaching

The aim of this theme is to ensure that teaching in the classroom is the best it can possibly be, with teachers receiving training and support on strategies to support disadvantaged pupils, leading to significantly improved outcomes.

Targeted Academic Support

Intervention can be effective in improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils if it is appropriate, carefully implemented and managed. We will work with school leaders to identify the best interventions, support staff training and share best practice from across the City. The impact of these interventions will also be carefully measured to ensure they are making the desired difference.

Pupil Voice and Pastoral Support

Listening to the children and young people this strategy sets out to support is vital if it is to succeed. This theme will explore opportunities to understand the barriers, to explore possible solutions and ensure disadvantaged young people feel they can engage in their education.

Language and Literacy

Research clearly shows that early reading, and language development have a huge impact on later educational achievement. Work to support the development of language and literacy and a love of reading for disadvantaged pupils will have significant impact on their academic outcomes and life chances.

Attendance

Finally, there is a clear link between attendance and positive outcomes, so work to support better attendance for disadvantaged pupils will lead to significant improvements in outcomes.

Monitoring the Impact

Each theme will be led by a Local Authority officer and a headteacher representative, who will provide regular reports and updates on their plans and the impact of their work, both to the Brighton and Hove Education Partnership Board and the Children and Young People's Committee.