Mulberry School for Girls
Case Study: Effective Use of the Pupil Premium
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Context: Mulberry School for Girls is situated in an area of inner city London which experiences considerable challenges from issues connected to ‘relative’ (and in some cases, situations bordering on ‘absolute’) poverty. The issues encountered by pupils include: poor quality of housing, which can sometimes be extreme i.e. homelessness or squalor; overcrowded housing, which is very common; worklessness; poor health, disability and lower life expectancy; mental health problems within families; violence, substance and alcohol misuse; illiteracy and language barriers; experience of crime, especially on the streets. At Mulberry, 60% of pupils take free school meals. The school’s intake reflects the highest decile of IDACI and has a school deprivation indicator of 0.6 (national average 0.21).

Barriers to learning that have arisen within this context in the past have been: lack of confidence and subsequently aspiration; lack of parental engagement; poor attendance to school and truancy from lessons; poor health, fitness and diet; difficulties with completion of homework due to lack of personal space and ICT resources; mental health issues and complex ESBD; poor take-up of further and higher education; lack of engagement with opportunities to widen experience beyond school through curriculum enrichment activities, trips, visits, programmes like the Model UN, Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme, etc.

Approach to Use of the Pupil Premium: Mulberry School for Girls has established a clear whole school ethos which provides a holistic approach to raising attainment. Pupils have to be ready to learn when they come to lessons. Barriers to learning, such as those described above, make this more difficult for many and so the pupil premium helps Mulberry to make extra provision for pupils to ensure that they have the support they need engage with their lessons and get the most out of their school life.

The school aims to: provide an environment in which young women can become confident and creative learners, with a love of learning. Girls are provided with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills in a wide variety of areas. There is a rich global education in which perspectives can be broadened and aspirations created. Opportunities to experience the world of work are offered. There is extensive enrichment of the curriculum so that girls enjoy their learning. Parents and families come into school to participate in their daughters’ learning and to enrich their own lives through classes that address worklessness, health
problems and isolation. The school engenders in girls a ‘can do’ attitude and the desire to make a contribution to the community and the wider world after leaving the school.

The pupil premium is used to provide targeted support for groups of pupils who need different types of intervention so that they can engage with the school’s aims effectively. Here are a number of examples:

1. **Targeted Intervention in Learning**: Data on pupils’ performance is analysed rigorously to identify possible under-attainment. A ‘nurture’ group is created within each year group by the Year Learning Co-Ordinator. This is called ‘Star Academy’. Pupils have a personalised programme of support in their learning, the impact of which is monitored and altered as necessary. This support comprises:

   a. **Academic Mentoring** by a trained worker who sees a pupil in this group at least once a week for one-to-one tutoring. The mentor also supports the pupil in some lessons where she has more difficulty. The mentor helps the pupil with organisational skills, study support and homework completion. The mentor meets regularly with parents / carers to discuss the pupil’s progress. The mentor provides a drop-in space at lunchtimes or after school to deal with issues that crop up outside usual mentoring times. If there is any detection of disaffection or difficulty, the mentor picks this up and discusses it with other adults at the school to see what more support can be provided. Mentors are usually role models from the community and often former pupils of the school who have been to university and are now seeking work in education prior to teaching.

   b. **Alternative Curriculum** – where necessary (rarely) a pupil in Star Academy may be given the opportunity to vary slightly her learning programme. For example, all pupils take 10 or more traditional GCSEs. A Star Academy pupil may take an alternative subject to replace one or two GCSEs – no more. This eases the pressure so that she may still gain eight traditional GCSEs.

   c. **Additional Maths, English and Science Support** – pupils may have access to additional support in core subjects where they struggle in one. This is through reconstituted teaching groups in Year 11 so that the teachers who have the strongest track record of working with pupils who have difficulty teach those classes. Additional classes are provided at weekends, in the holiday or after school.

   d. **Academic Residentials** – pupils in targeted intervention groups attend a weekend residential in maths, English and / or science in order to provide them with an intensive experience over a 72 hour period in the subject area.
e. Weekend, after school and school holiday intervention classes are held in every subject area by pupils’ own subject teachers.

2. **Targeted Support Through the Inclusion Service:** Mulberry School provides targeted support for pupils through a range of health and social services provided on site. These services include support by two Attendance and Welfare Officers, a trained counsellor and arts therapist, a social worker, a health adviser and a police liaison officer. All these workers, except the police liaison officer, are employed directly by the school. The support is tailored. Pupils are identified by Year Learning Co-Ordinators through their detailed knowledge of each pupil in their year group. The support happens in the following ways:

   a. Meetings are held fortnightly with this team, led by an Inclusion Co-Ordinator attended by the Year Learning Co-Ordinator. Where issues of poor attendance, poor behaviour, troubled behaviour, poor engagement in lessons have occurred or where incidents of trauma or child protection have arisen, pupils are discussed individually by the team and a personalised programme is put in place to support each one. This will include home liaison.

   b. Home visits are undertaken by the Year Learning Co-Ordinator, the social worker and the AWOs to support and help families where difficulties have arisen.

   c. Regular evaluation is undertaken to monitor impact. Sometimes outside agencies are involved and referrals of pupils are made to more specialised provision such as psychological or hospital medical services. On occasion, families have been helped with housing where they are in danger of being made homeless thus affecting the educational well-being of a pupil.

3. **Parental and Community Engagement:** At Mulberry School for Girls, we have found that one of the interventions which has had most impact has been the engagement of parents, especially mothers, in their daughters’ learning. Through this work a collective responsibility for learning amongst pupils, teachers, parents and the wider community has been created. This work happens as follows:

   a. A parent liaison officer has been employed by the school to create a network of family support. She runs activities and workshops to engage parents in the education of their daughters. For example, parents come into school to receive their daughters’ mock examination results in small groups. Once the results are opened, parents talk about them with teachers and their daughters, learning about all the support that is on offer to their daughter
going forward to the final summer exams. Parents and daughters then create an action plan together for the final six months of their Year 11.

b. Parents have a programme of family learning which supports them in dealing with the issues they face at home. Some of the programmes are social to provide strong bonds between families and the school. Some are designed to empower parents to go back into work, for example developing vital skills such as ICT or language and numeracy. Some are designed to address health issues, such as diabetes, heart disease and alcohol misuse. All these things impact on the home lives of pupils and present barriers to learning when they come to school each day. The help and support provided builds confidence within the community and the capacity to find ways out of difficult situations.

4. Developing Opportunities Which Instil Confidence and Support the Development of Aspiration: Mulberry has developed a range of programmes and opportunities which enable pupils to leave school full of confidence and ambition with an enthusiasm for life and a desire to make a positive contribution. Examples of these programmes include:

a. The Model United Nations programme, which Mulberry runs for 30 London state schools and which provides pupils with the opportunity to mix with many young people as well as providing them with a platform for public speaking.

b. The Year 9 Arts Project, which involves every pupil in creating an original performance in which they must each speak, sing, act, dance and create original drama.

c. The Edinburgh Arts Apprenticeship Programme in which pupils devise a play and perform it at the Edinburgh fringe festival.

d. Duke of Edinburgh’s Award Scheme
e. Women’s Education Office which organises a range of educational projects, including a conference programme in which inspiring women speak about their lives and their successes, usually from business and industry.

f. Work place mentoring and shadowing with exceptional women in business and industry.

As a result, achievement and attainment are high at Mulberry with a continuing pattern of over 80% of pupils graduating from the sixth form into university degree courses. GCSE
results have significantly improved over time. Pupils on pupil premium do exceptionally well compared to the national average.

Mulberry is especially proud of the fact that the school scores a progress 8 measure of 0.81.