

Ashbourne Primary School's Disadvantaged Provision – Close The Gap

Introduction: This document outlines how leaders, teachers and teaching assistants can provide high-quality, inclusive education that ensures disadvantaged pupils achieve in line with, or better than, their peers. It complements our SEND Provision Guidance and supports a consistent whole-school approach to inclusion. Disadvantaged pupils may face a range of barriers that impact academic progress, engagement and wellbeing. These are not linked to ability but to access, opportunity and circumstances. High-quality teaching, strong relationships and proactive planning can close the gap effectively.

This guide provides:

- Clear identification of typical barriers.
- Proactive strategies to remove barriers before teaching.
- Responsive strategies during and after lessons.
- Subject-specific adaptations to ensure equity of access.
- Evidence-informed approaches with proven impact.

Who are disadvantaged pupils?

Disadvantaged pupils include those who are:

- Eligible for Pupil Premium (current or historical)
- Looked-After Children (LAC), Previously Looked-After Children (Post-LAC)
- Young carers
- Pupils experiencing low socio-economic circumstances
- Pupils with social care involvement
- Pupils experiencing instability, trauma or low parental capacity
- Pupils who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, which may include pupils who share a protected characteristic.

Core Principles of Inclusive Practice For Disadvantaged:

- Build strong, positive, trusting relationships
- Maintain high expectations: never lower the challenge, increase the scaffolds
- Ensure predictable routines and consistency across the school day
- Use explicit teaching, modelling and guided practice

- Prioritise vocabulary, language and oracy
- Pre-teach key concepts and vocabulary
- Avoid any practice that causes shame or public comparison
- Be trauma-informed and attachment-aware
- Teach metacognition and self-regulation
- Every adult is responsible for closing the disadvantage gap

Intended Impact:

By using this guidance consistently across the school, disadvantaged pupils will:

- Develop confidence, resilience and a strong sense of belonging.
- Make accelerated academic progress.
- Engage more deeply in all curriculum areas.
- Experience enrichment and broader opportunities.

Teachers and TAs will:

- Plan adaptively with inclusion in mind.
- Deploy consistent, evidence-based strategies.
- Build positive relationships that transform learning.
- Contribute to a culture where disadvantage is never a barrier to success. Scaffolds are used to support access.

Monitoring & Evaluation of Disadvantaged Provision:

To ensure sustained impact, leaders and teachers will monitor provision for disadvantaged pupils through:

- Learning walks focusing on scaffolding, modelling and vocabulary
- Book looks to evaluate progression, scaffolds independence and misconceptions
- Pupil voice to assess confidence and understanding
- Attendance and punctuality analysis with early intervention
- TA deployment reviews termly to ensure effective use of adult support
- Termly checks on enrichment access to ensure equity
- Termly pupil progress reviews
- Half termly safeguarding reviews

Potential Barriers For Disadvantaged Pupils

Disadvantaged pupils are a diverse group with individual needs. Barriers arise from access, opportunity and circumstance - not ability. Barriers often overlap, so staff must identify each pupil's needs. The barriers are organised under five evidence-based areas:

1) Academic & Cognitive Barriers	2) Social, Emotional & Behavioural Barriers
-Limited early language exposure (word gap). -Gaps in background knowledge and prior learning. -Weaker working memory and processing skills. -Difficulty organising learning, sequencing tasks or planning work. -Struggles with independent learning (over-reliance on adults). -Difficulty retaining information (weaker long-term memory). -Lower stamina for extended concentration or sustained effort. -Difficulty with reasoning, problem-solving or making links. -Limited background reading experience or fewer knowledge-building experiences.	-Low academic self-esteem and reduced confidence. -Fear of failure, avoidance of challenge or perfectionism. -Trauma, stress or insecure attachment impacting regulation. -Difficulty trusting adults or forming safe relationships. -Difficulty with emotional regulation (fight/flight responses). -Higher anxiety related to instability or past experiences. -Limited resilience and reduced ability to recover from setbacks. -Challenges forming friendships or cooperating with peers. -Underdeveloped social interaction skills.
3) Communication & Vocabulary Barriers	4) Parental Engagement Barriers
-Reduced early language exposure. -Limited vocabulary, including subject-specific language. -Difficulty expressing ideas verbally or finding the right words. -Fewer real-life references or experiences to support learning. -Poor listening and attention skills linked to language development. -Difficulty understanding instructions. -Limited oral rehearsal opportunities outside school. -Difficulty making inferences due to limited conceptual knowledge.	-Limited availability (shift work, multiple jobs, unpredictable hours). -Low confidence engaging with school. -Negative past experiences of education. -Fear of judgement or low trust in professionals. -Language barriers affecting communication. -Limited parental literacy. -Parents unfamiliar with the curriculum or how to support learning at home. -Parents reluctant to ask for help due to shame or stigma.

5) Practical, Financial & Environmental Barriers

Practical Barriers

- Disrupted home routines affecting readiness to learn.
- Fatigue, poor sleep or inconsistent bedtime routines.
- Hunger or inconsistent access to food.
- Lack of quiet space for reading or homework.
- Overcrowded housing or temporary accommodation.
- Lack of transport to school or events.
- Frequent lateness due to chaotic mornings.
- Limited access to digital devices or internet.

Financial Barriers

- Inability to afford uniform, PE kit or equipment.
- Unable to pay for trips, clubs or enrichment activities.
- No access to books, stationery or learning resources.

Environmental & Family Factors

- Housing instability or frequent moves.
- Domestic instability (conflict, separation, domestic abuse).
- Parental physical or mental health needs affecting capacity.
- Family stress, crisis or Social Care involvement.
- Substance misuse within the family.
- Parents with SEND or learning difficulties.
- Caring responsibilities for siblings or family members.

Evidence Based Approaches for Disadvantaged Pupils

These approaches represent the strongest, research-backed methods for improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Each approach connects directly to the barriers identified in the previous section and underpins our whole-school practice.

1. High-Quality Teaching

High-quality teaching has the greatest impact on disadvantaged pupils. It ensures they experience clarity, structure and meaningful practice.

Key Components:

- Explicit instruction and clear modelling
- Scaffolded practice that gradually reduces
- Retrieval practice to strengthen memory
- High-quality feedback
- Dual coding (images + text) to support understanding
- Well-sequenced lessons that build prior knowledge

2. Strong, Trusting Relationships

Secure relationships support emotional safety, belonging and motivation - especially for pupils experiencing instability, trauma or low self-esteem.

Key Components:

- Consistent key adults and predictable routines
- Warm greetings and strong relationships
- Emotionally regulated responses from adults
- Trauma-informed practice
- Repair/restorative conversations to rebuild trust

3. Oracy & Vocabulary Development

Vocabulary is a key predictor of long-term academic success. Disadvantaged pupils benefit from daily, structured opportunities to speak, rehearse and learn new language.

Key Components:

- Pre-teaching vocabulary
- Sentence stems and structured talk routines
- Modelling precise and ambitious language
- Opportunities for oral rehearsal
- Use of visuals

4. Metacognition & Self-Regulation

Teaching pupils 'how to learn' improves independence and reduces reliance on adult support.

Key Components:

- Think-aloud demonstrated by teachers
- Scaffolds for planning, monitoring and evaluating
- Self-assessment and reflection routines
- Strategic instructions for approaching tasks
- Modelling perseverance and resilience

5. Targeted Academic Support	6. Enrichment
When used strategically, targeted support can close specific gaps identified through assessment. Key Components: • Pre-teaching key concepts and vocabulary • Precision tutoring and short, focused intervention • Guided groups linked to classroom learning • Frequent checks for understanding • Post-teaching to consolidate tricky content	Experiences beyond the classroom broaden understanding, vocabulary and confidence. Key Components: • Trips, clubs and enrichment activities • Cultural experiences linked to curriculum • Cost-neutral access for all pupils • Leadership roles and responsibilities • Outdoor, creative and experiential learning
7. Attendance & Readiness to Learn	
Good attendance is essential for progress. Proactive support prevents and addresses persistent absence. Key Components: • Early and positive communication with families • Breakfast and readiness-to-learn provision • Uniform/equipment support • Attendance mentoring • Daily meet-and-greet routines • Collaborative work with pastoral and safeguarding team.	

Strategies To Support Disadvantaged Pupils

Proactive Strategies (Before planning a Unit Of Work or Lesson)	Reactive Strategies (During a lesson)
Planning: - Identify gaps in prior knowledge and plan targeted pre-teaching. - Build background knowledge through images, artefacts, stories, books, video and discussion. - Pre-teach vocabulary and concepts using visuals. - Introduce sticky knowledge/Flashback 4 early with visuals. - Embed retrieval practice to strengthen memory. - Break learning into clear, logical chunks.	Academic Support: - Re-teach key ideas in-the-moment. - Use micro-scaffolds (sentence stems, phonics prompts, steps, chunking, first/then lists). - Reduce task size while maintaining cognitive challenge. - Provide concrete examples to support abstract thinking.
Environment: - Provide consistent, calm starts and transitions. - Ensure access to equipment discretely so no child feels different. - Display vocabulary, models, success criteria and sentence stems. - Create a classroom environment based on psychological safety.	Social & Emotional Regulation - Use Zones Of Regulation strategies (calm space, modelling breathing, I can see you're in ... zone so let's ...). - Offer adult support and 1:1/group modelling 'Let's work it out together.' - Provide discrete brain/movement breaks if overwhelmed. - Offer predictable behaviour responses.
Relationships: - Build positive, trusting relationships. - Use consistent key adults where possible. - Greet pupils positively every morning. - Assign leadership roles to promote belonging. - Use strengths-based language.	Motivation & Engagement - Celebrate effort and progress. - Provide immediate purposeful feedback. - Use low-stakes participation (whiteboards, partnered talk).
Instruction & Scaffolding - Plan explicit instruction and worked examples. - Create model. - Provide sentence stems and structured talk routines. - Provide images for text - Avoid assuming prior experiences- plan to teach everything explicitly.	Behaviour as Communication - Look at the why before the what. - Respond with empathy but with boundaries and high expectations. - Avoid public corrections that trigger shame.

• Provide a range of visual scaffolds	
Parental Engagement • Offer flexible communication methods (dojo, phone call, Arbor, parent meeting, report cards, curriculum meetings) • Provide simple, realistic home learning ideas. • Celebrate effort frequently. • Provide translation or simplified guidance where needed.	

Core Subjects

Disadvantaged pupils may face specific barriers in core subjects. The sections below provide practical strategies to ensure equity and high achievement in Phonics, Reading, Writing, SPaG and Maths.

Phonics Common Barriers • Limited exposure to language and sounds before school. • Difficulty hearing and distinguishing phonemes. • Inconsistent attendance - missed steps in the phonics sequence. • Low confidence in reading aloud. • Difficulty blending or segmenting due to working memory needs. • Anxiety around being 'put on the spot.' Proactive Support • Pre-teach that day's graphemes/phonemes. • Revisit previously taught sounds through retrieval practice. • Provide targeted groupings based on regular assessment. • Ensure access to a phonics-aligned reading book. • Model blending during whole-class teaching ('my turn - your turn'). • Embed multisensory approaches. Responsive Support • Provide immediate, precise corrective feedback. • Concrete resources (sound buttons, counters, magnetic letters). • Re-teach small steps rather than reteaching whole lessons. • Offer 1:1 or small-group rapid intervention the same day. • Provide sentence stems ('I can see _ says ____'). Helpful Resources • Sound mats • Grapheme charts • Magnetic letters • Phoneme frames • Decodable book matched to current GPCs	Reading Common Barriers • Limited exposure to books at home. • Reduced background knowledge for comprehension. • Lower vocabulary breadth and depth. • Difficulty decoding or low reading fluency. • Anxiety when reading aloud. • Struggle to infer due to limited conceptual knowledge. Proactive Support • Pre-teach key vocabulary and tricky phrases. • Build background knowledge using images, short videos, objects. • Model fluency daily (echo, class and paired reading). • Provide structured reading routines and talk frames. • Use dual coding (image and text) for comprehension questions. • Teacher-led reading of challenging texts to model thinking. Responsive Support • Re-teach words with decoding prompts. • Provide a quiet, supported space for reading. • Scaffold inference using sentence stems: 'I think this because...' • Allow oral rehearsal of answers before writing. • Re-read the same section for fluency practice. Helpful Resources • Vocabulary mats • Comprehension sentence stems • Story maps & character maps • Decodable books • Paired/echo reading routines
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Writing

Common Barriers

- Limited vocabulary makes sentence creation difficult.
- Difficulty organising ideas into structure.
- Low writing stamina.
- Struggles with transcription (handwriting, spelling).
- Limited background knowledge for content-rich writing.
- Fear of making mistakes.

Proactive Support

- Pre-teach vocabulary with images, real objects and actions.
- Provide model texts and story maps.
- Use shared writing to model composition.
- Provide chunked success criteria.
- Break writing into manageable stages:
Planning → Model → Shared → Scaffolded → Independent.
- Build background knowledge explicitly before writing tasks.
- Give sentence starters, writing frames and word banks.

Responsive Support

- Offer a mini-model or quick plan for pupils who get stuck.
- Scribe ideas first, then let the pupil write independently.
- Support spelling with mats/prompt cards
- Provide short 'writing stamina breaks.'
- Chunk writing tasks into manageable chunks

Helpful Resources

- Sentence stems
- Writing frames
- Vocabulary banks
- Model paragraphs
- Graphic organisers (story map, flowchart, plan template)

SPaG (Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar)

Common Barriers

- Limited vocabulary and grammar exposure in early years.
- Difficulty learning spelling patterns due to memory needs.
- Confusion around grammar terminology.
- Low confidence applying grammar in independent writing.
- Difficulty transferring taught SPaG to writing tasks.

Proactive Support

- Pre-teach vocabulary (noun, verb, clause, prefix...).
- Use visual examples (colour-coded sentences, diagrams).
- Model grammar structures within meaningful sentences.
- Use chanting, actions and multisensory spelling practice.
- Provide rule reminders and patterns before writing tasks.

Responsive Support

- Highlight and correct one focus area at a time (avoid overload).
- Provide 'fix-it' tasks immediately after modelling.
- Use substitution tasks to strengthen understanding (e.g. swap the adjective - how does the meaning change?).
- Provide spelling prompts rather than corrections.

Helpful Resources

- Colour-coded sentences/word classes
- SPaG vocabulary mats
- Editable sentence frames
- Visuals
- Mini whiteboards for reteach

Maths

Common Barriers

- Limited fluency with basic number facts.
- Working memory challenges with multi-step procedures.
- Difficulty understanding and using mathematical vocabulary.
- Low confidence, fear of mistakes.
- Limited real-life mathematical experiences.

Proactive Support

- Pre-teach vocabulary with concrete examples.
- Use manipulatives and visual representations.
- Model problem-solving through think-aloud.
- Break down tasks into small, structured steps.
- Build in daily retrieval of key number facts.
- Use reasoning stems: 'I know this because...'
- Provide worked examples before independent practice.

Responsive Support

- Return to concrete materials if stuck.
- Re-model a step using a simpler example.
- Reduce quantity but keep challenge the same.
- Provide targeted intervention.
- Clarify reasoning using sentence stems and visuals.

Helpful Resources

- Ten frames, bead strings, dienes
- Number lines and part-whole models
- Visual examples
- Stem sentences
- Chunked steps

Foundation Subjects

In all foundation subjects, disadvantaged pupils may face subject-specific barriers to access or engagement. The following guidance supports teachers and TAs to plan and deliver inclusive learning experiences across each curriculum area.

Art & Design

Common Barriers

- Limited exposure to art tools or artistic experiences.
- Low confidence in creative tasks.
- Difficulty following multi-step processes.

Proactive Support

- Provide clear, visual step-by-step instructions.
- Pre-teach techniques through modelling.
- Introduce key vocabulary visually.
- Offer examples/models to build understanding.

Responsive Support

- Reinforce steps one at a time.
- Provide encouragement focused on effort.
- Offer prompts or small scaffolded tasks.

Helpful Resources

- Visual instructions, templates.
- Vocabulary with images.
- Examples of finished work.

Design & Technology

Common Barriers

- Limited experience handling tools.
- Difficulty sequencing multi-step tasks.
- Low resilience with trial and error.

Proactive Support

- Demonstrate processes slowly and clearly.
- Provide graphic organisers and scaffolded checklists.
- Pre-teach tool safety and usage.

Responsive Support

- Model steps again where needed.
- Provide calm, positive reinforcement.
- Break tasks into manageable chunks.

Helpful Resources

- Visual guides, templates.
- Step-by-step tool instructions.
- Simplified success criteria.

Music

Common Barriers

- Anxiety around performance.
- Limited exposure to musical language.
- Sensory sensitivity to noise.

Proactive Support

- Pre-teach musical terms using visuals.
- Allow exploration of instruments before whole-class tasks.
- Provide structured routine for music lessons.

Responsive Support

- Provide ear defenders where needed.
- Offer participation options (clapping, tapping, conducting).
- Give positive feedback for engagement, not accuracy.

Helpful Resources

- Visual word banks.
- Simplified notation.
- Ear defenders.

Foundation Subjects

History

Common Barriers

- Limited background knowledge.
- Difficulty accessing dense historical texts.
- Abstract concepts.

Proactive Support

- Build background knowledge using images, artefacts and videos.
- Provide text and image resources.
- Simplify texts without reducing challenge.
- Pre-teach timelines and key vocabulary.

Responsive Support

- Restate information in simpler terms.
- Use sentence stems during discussions.
- Provide scaffolds for analysis (e.g., “cause → effect” frames).

Helpful Resources

- Visual timelines.
- Vocabulary mats.
- Storyboards and role-play props.

Geography

Common Barriers

- Limited real-world geographical experiences.
- Difficulty understanding maps or abstract spatial concepts.

Proactive Support

- Use tangible resources (globes, atlases, models).
- Connect learning to local area first.
- Provide pre-labelled maps and colour-coded keys.

Responsive Support

- Re-explain concepts using concrete examples.
- Use visuals and diagrams.
- Break tasks into short, structured steps.

Helpful Resources

- Simplified maps.
- Photos and satellite images.
- Visual checklists.

Science

Common Barriers

- Limited prior experience with scientific enquiry.
- Difficulty understanding abstract concepts.
- Anxiety around practical tasks.

Proactive Support

- Pre-teach scientific vocabulary.
- Use concrete objects and demonstrations.
- Provide visual instructions for experiments.

Responsive Support

- Re-model steps or methods.
- Provide alternative ways to record learning.
- Support emotional regulation during experiments.

Helpful Resources

- Visual organisers.
- Structured investigation templates.
- Real-life examples and objects.

Foundation Subjects

PE

Common Barriers

- Low confidence.
- Limited prior exposure to organised sport.
- Difficulty with coordination.

Proactive Support

- Model movements step-by-step.
- Introduce activities gradually.
- Ensure equipment is accessible and safe.

Responsive Support

- Provide verbal and visual feedback.
- Celebrate effort, not performance.
- Allow pupils to take alternative roles if anxious.

Helpful Resources

- Visual sequencing cards.
- Adapted equipment.
- Positive reinforcement systems.

PHSE/SRE

Common Barriers

- Limited emotional vocabulary.
- Difficulty discussing feelings or sensitive topics.
- Potential trauma triggers.

Proactive Support

- Use visuals, social stories and role play.
- Build a predictable, safe discussion environment.
- Pre-teach key concepts.

Responsive Support

- Provide breaks if overwhelmed.
- Use emotion coaching language.
- Ensure discussions are sensitive and inclusive.

Helpful Resources

- Emotions cards.
- Sentence stems.
- Calm space

RE

Common Barriers

- Limited prior experience with different cultures or religions.
- Abstract concepts may be difficult to grasp.

Proactive Support

- Use concrete artefacts, stories and visuals.
- Build background knowledge step-by-step.
- Provide comparison charts.

Responsive Support

- Clarify abstract concepts with examples.
- Use sentence stems.
- Provide alternative ways to contribute.

Helpful Resources

- Religious artefacts.
- Story sequencing visuals.
- Graphic organisers.

Foundation Subjects

MFL

Common Barriers

- Limited exposure to languages at home.
- Low confidence in speaking aloud.

Proactive Support

- Use multisensory teaching.
- Colour-code sentence structure.
- Pre-teach vocabulary using pictures.

Responsive Support

- Allow pupils to participate through pointing/choosing.
- Provide immediate positive reinforcement.
- Offer visual sentence frames.

Helpful Resources

- Flashcards.
- Picture dictionaries.
- Action-based songs.