

Subject:	A Review of 'Poverty Proofing the School Day' Programme
Date of Meeting:	4 March 2019
Report of:	Executive Director for Families, Children & Learning
Contact Officer: Name:	Hilary Ferries
Email:	Hilary.ferries@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Ward(s) affected:	(All Wards)

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The report outlines the implementation of 'Poverty Proofing the School Day' across schools in the City.
- 1.2 The report outlines the project the 'legacy' and follow up actions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee note the work of schools in this area and the positive response from many school leaders to 'Poverty Proofing the School Day'.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1. In March 2017 the Children, Young People and Skills Committee agreed to offer the 'Poverty Proofing the School Day' audit to all schools in the city over two years. The definition of poverty used is

'Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities, and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary patterns, customs and activities.'

- 3.2. 'Poverty Proofing the School Day' was developed by Children North East. It aims to reduce stigma and remove barriers to learning and to assist school leaders to explore the most effective ways to spend pupil premium allocation. Researchers carry out an audit in school about different areas of school life. They listen to pupils, staff, parents / carers and governors. The result is a

report for the school that outlines good practice, raises areas to explore and suggests actions that they may wish to take to address the areas to explore. The strength of the audit is looking at the school through the lens of children and families who highlight any potentially stigmatising policies or practices.

‘Poverty Proofing the School Day’ in the City

- 3.3. The project has been carried out in partnership with Children North East (CNE), who have trained the team of researchers. Researchers come from schools and members of the Standards and Achievement team. The CNE lead, Luke Bramhall, has come to Brighton & Hove each term to monitor the project, visit schools to get feedback and follow up on issues raised with schools. The model of using local school staff as researchers, rather than employing someone for two years, has meant that there is a team of researchers / ‘experts’ across the schools, to be champions for Poverty Proofing going forward.

Schools / teams that have ‘Poverty Proofing the School Day’ trained researchers		
Downs Infant	Woodingdean Primary	Dorothy Stringer
Stanford Infant	Moulsecoomb Primary	Hove Park
Patcham Junior	Balfour Primary	Longhill High
Hertford Infants	Bevendean Primary	Patcham High
Fairlight Primary	Carlton Hill	Blatchington Mill
Mile Oak Primary	Partnership Adviser: Health & Wellbeing	BHASVIC
School Partnership Adviser	Adult learning team (2)members)	Senior Adviser: Education Partnerships

- 3.4. All schools have engaged in the project, either through an audit, having a trained researcher, or taking part in conversations about the issues involved. Over 50 audits have been carried out and the schools are listed below, ordered by term of audit. . There have been regular updates and presentations at headteacher meetings. Secondary school ‘peer researchers’ from Longhill High have also presented to school leaders.

Summer term 2017	Summer 2018	Spring 2019
Woodingdean Primary	Peter Gladwin Primary	Carden Primary
Moulsecoomb Primary	St John the Baptist RC Primary	Brackenbury Primary
Patcham Junior	St Joseph's RC Primary	St Bartholomew's CE Primary
BACA	St Mary's RC Primary	St Mark's CE Primary
Autumn 2017	St Martin's CE Primary	Elm Grove Primary
Our Lady of Lourdes RC Primary	Fairlight Primary	Rudyard Kipling Primary
St Margaret's CE Primary	Cottesmore St Mary's RC Primary	Westdene Primary
Carlton Hill Primary	Downs Junior	Brunswick Primary
West Blatchington Primary	St Luke's Primary	PACA
St Mary Magdalen RC Primary	West Hove Infant	King's School
Queens Park Primary	Balfour Primary	
Mile Oak Primary	Hove Park	
Patcham High	Cardinal Newman	
Dorothy Stringer	PRU	
Spring 2018	Autumn 2018	
Hertford Infant	St Andrew's CE Primary	
Hertford Junior	St Bernadette's RC Primary	
St Paul's CE Primary	Stanford Infant	
Middle Street Primary	Aldrington CE Primary	
St Peter's Community Primary	Bilingual Primary School	
Benfield Primary	Stanford Junior	
Patcham Infant	Goldstone Primary	
St Nicolas CE Primary	Hove Junior	
Downs Infant	Varndean	
Longhill High		

- 3.5. The positive take up of the project is testament to the concern and commitment Brighton & Hove school leaders have for pupil and student wellbeing and particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The teams of researchers have found many examples of good practice already existing in the city which are designed to support vulnerable pupils and students to learn and achieve. Sharing examples of good practice across the wider community of schools across the city has been a key outcome from the project. More detail can be found in Appendix 1.
- 3.6. Key examples of learning that has been shared are as follows:
- Celebrations of events such as birthdays can be stressful for some children but alleviated by, for example, everyone singing happy birthday, or providing a birthday card from a collection made by the children themselves,
 - Avoiding the risk of children from poorer backgrounds typically finding themselves in lower ability groups by providing opportunities for self-directed learning such as 'chilli challenges' where pupils choose their own level of challenge,
 - Carefully planning extra-curricular trips and activities by, for example, offering free after-school activities, planning trips well in advance and

- giving parents an opportunity to pay in instalments if there is a cost, focussing on low cost activities such as trips to local museums, subsidising the costs for some families, and accepting donations,
- No school visited had a system where the school community could see which pupils are entitled to free school meals,
- Helping families to support their children to complete homework by giving access to facilities at the school or ensuring that tasks don't require access to a computer,
- Providing resources to children directly, such as a free pencil case for all children or costumes for dressing up days and curriculum days.

3.7. In addition to specific examples of good practice in city schools there have been some general areas that have been picked up through the various school audits:

- Schools have clear behaviour management policies that are applied consistently – these are often informed by pupil voice and developed with them. There is also good anti-bullying practice in the city.
- There were many examples of where school leaders and governors have taken an active role to tackle the consequences of disadvantage. This includes having in place Pupil Premium Champion governors.
- The music service in the city is a strength, going well beyond its statutory remit and not charging for many of its services. The service has now moved out of the LA, however it continues to provide a range of excellent services to schools. These include Soundmakers where all pupils in a class learn an instrument at no cost to the pupils, whole city opportunities such as the Primary Christmas Concert, which has a small charge to schools and newly opened drop-in music spaces based in Whitehawk and Hangleton for young people. The Service is very aware of keeping costs for pupils, families and schools as low as possible and is exploring fundraising opportunities.
- Transport is seen as an issue in a number of schools. Some primary schools raised concerns about limitations that the bus providers seem to put on them when they are using buses for school trips. For some secondary school pupils there are difficulties travelling home if pupils want to access after school clubs (because the school buses are timed at the end of the school day). These are being discussed with bus providers.

3.8. School uniform is a complex area, not just in Brighton and Hove, but across the country. Many of the primary schools have a simple uniform, in colours that are accessible from high street stores and a good selection of pre-loved uniform that is available. Some schools are able to target families in need and direct uniform pieces that come into school to them. The situation is more complex in secondary schools and recommendations have been made to increase the amount of pre-loved uniform available (some schools have recent uniform changes so there is not yet a collection that families can access) and to consider whether they need to purchase separate PE kit if they play in a club/team.

- 3.9. 'Good Practice Guides' (appendix one) have been published which celebrate the good practice and provide opportunities for schools to contact their colleagues that have strong policy / culture.
- 3.10. Areas of concern that have arisen in many schools have been identified and a booklet developed with ideas for action that could be taken to address them. For example, many schools are calculating the 'cost of school', by adding up the cost of all the activities across the year for each year group, to review whether everything they do is necessary and what the impact is on families. Schools are publishing these to enable parents to plan and to make it clear how to access additional financial support if this is needed. Another area that has arisen is a widespread lack of understanding and awareness about poverty. Members of the researcher team have written lesson plans on 'Understanding Poverty'. These have been developed in partnership with Children North East and will be available to all schools in the city.
- 3.11. Whole city issues that have emerged, such as transport, food and the music service are being discussed and followed up. There was also a lack of understanding of poverty and a series of lesson plans have been designed that will be shared with all schools.
- 3.12. The Pavilion and Downs Teaching School Alliance are developing a network of champions from across city schools and will continue to disseminate the findings and look at school life through a poverty proofing lens. The development of school self-evaluation tool will also enable schools to keep their practice under review.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Schools are responsible for their own improvement and can choose which areas identified in their reports to follow up. By identifying and sharing good practice across the city it is hoped that schools will see further possibilities.
- 4.2 The model used in the city of using practitioners across the city who have developed a 'poverty proofing lens', means that there is knowledge, expertise and commitment to good and best practice which remains in the city.
- 4.3 Strong partnership working has enabled the project to continue – for example the Pavilion and Downs Teaching School offering to host and run the network for Poverty Proofing Champions.

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 'Poverty Proofing the School Day' is built around engagement with the community. During the audits the researchers talk with every pupil and student. In secondary schools the students get the opportunity to be peer researchers and canvass their peers.

5.2 The research team has been available in and out in the playground before and after the school day and there have been opportunities for parents / carers to feed back, both through paper based and internet surveys.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 There has been very positive engagement from schools in the project. However, poverty remains a real issue for many families in the city and the recommendations are made to maintain the poverty proofing lens, both by schools taking action from their audits and by systemic developments considerations to continue this focus.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

7.1 The project had funding of £150,000 over the two years, This was spent on the licence with Children North East, the training of researchers, the supply cover / daily rate of the researchers and the development of materials.

Finance Officer consulted: David Ellis

Date: 24 January 2019

Legal Implications:

7.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report

Lawyer consulted: Serena Kynaston

Date: 10 January 2019

Equalities Implications:

7.1 As per the report

Sustainability Implications:

7.2 None identified

Any Other Significant Implications:

7.3 None identified

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Poverty Proofing the School Day' in Brighton & Hove Good Practice and Whole City Update: Volume One June 2018

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

