

**‘Poverty Proofing the School Day’ in Brighton & Hove**  
**Good Practice and Whole City Update: Volume One**  
**June 2018**

**1. Introduction**

‘Poverty Proofing the School Day’ was a recommendation made by the Fairness Commission in 2014. Councillors committed to offering the ‘Poverty Proofing the School Day’ process to every school in Brighton & Hove. Support is being provided by Children North East, the creators of ‘Poverty Proofing the School Day’ and includes a license agreement, training, direct support and quality assurance of processes. The project provides an audit which aims to poverty proof the school day, to reduce stigma and remove barriers to learning and to assist schools in exploring the most effective way to spend pupil premium allocation. More details can be found on their website, <http://www.povertyproofing.co.uk/>. The project runs for two financial years, from April 2017 to March 2019

**2. Poverty Proofing in Brighton & Hove**

The power of ‘Poverty Proofing the School Day’ audit is that the voices of all the children and young people in the school are heard and opportunities provided for all other stakeholders to participate. The report on the audit gives schools feedback on their systems and enables the leadership team to reflect on the findings, celebrate successes and consider whether there are any changes they can make to remove barriers for families that may be struggling with money.

A group of researchers, staff from schools across the city and the LA team, have been trained to lead and carry out the audits. A team of researchers go into schools and speak to every child and young person in groups. As well as speaking to all stakeholders on site during the audits, there is also a parent / carer questionnaire, a governor questionnaire and a staff questionnaire. At the end of the audit, the responses to questions are analysed and a report is written. The lead researcher goes back to the school to discuss the report and next steps. The report belongs to the school and is confidential to the school. To take part, schools indicate the term that they would like to have the audit the exact week is allocated. The number of researcher days is determined by the size of school.

**3. Examples of good practice in Brighton & Hove schools**

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 and designed to support vulnerable pupils and students to learn and achieve. It has been agreed that some examples would be share with the wider audience. These are some of the examples and are organised in the themes of questions that the Poverty Proofing audit explores. This report uses examples from the first 25 schools to take part in 'Poverty Proofing the School Day, from June 2017 to April 2018. Every school has examples of great practice, so this can only be a snapshot. School leaders are very happy to be contacted to talk about their schools:

Moulsecoomb Primary School
Woodingdean Primary School
Patcham Junior School
Brighton Aldridge Community Academy
Downs Junior School
Carlton Hill Primary School
Hertford Infants School
Hertford Juniors School
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Middle Street Primary School
Queens Park Primary School
Longhill High School
St Mary Magdalen Catholic Primary School
Patcham Infant School
Mile Oak Primary School
Patcham High School
Benfield Primary School
Downs Infant school
St Pauls CE Primary School
Dorothy Stringer
St Peters Primary School
West Blatchington Primary School
Longhill High School

### **Behaviour, rewards and attendance**

Pupils spoke most positively in schools where there are clear and consistent rewards. The vast majority of the schools taking part so far had clear rewards for good behaviour and attendance. Down's Junior, Carlton Hill, St Nicolas, St Joseph's, Middle Street and Woodingdean had particularly clear systems that were known and articulated by all the pupils. Queens' Park has a range of positive ways of addressing things that go wrong – e.g. the 'Do it right club', 'calm room' and 'solver 101'. Longhill students were very positive about the Focus Centre.

It was good to see pupils involved in school development. Mile Oak students were very keen to talk about their behaviour policy and knew it well. St Mary Magdalen had listened to pupil voice when reviewing their behaviour policy; BACA has a 'junior leadership team' to help make decisions in school. Patcham Infants has a 'rights and responsibilities rainbow' that school council links to actions.

### **Anti-bullying / bullying**

Particularly strong practice was seen in this area. In Woodingdean pupils identified the strong support they received from playground buddies and St Margaret's felt their 'bully busters' were very positive. In Moulsecoomb and Patcham parents, carers and pupils felt that there were always people they could talk to. Pupils at Benfield, Patcham Infants, St Mary Magdalen and Queens Park had a particularly clear understanding about what bullying meant and reported that their school was good at dealing with it.

### **Celebrations**

The audit explores the types of discussions and practices that take place around birthdays, holidays and special days. This is sometimes an area where children in poverty can feel left out.

At St Mary Magdalen all Y6 pupils are given a DVD of memories and a year book when they leave the school at no cost to children. In Woodingdean all Y6 pupils are given a leavers' fleece. These both allow for equality for all pupils.

For their birthdays, Downs Infant have the 'hedgehog chair of wonder' when it is their birthday, everyone sings to them and they get a sticker from the teacher. Several schools sing to pupils when it is their birthday, including St Paul's, St Joseph's and St Nicolas. St Peter's invites pupils to take a present from a special box. At Downs Junior, in September, the pupils make birthday cards from the class that are stored in the classroom, when it is a pupil's birthday they select a birthday card from the box. There was a strong celebratory culture in Longhill, Patcham High and Dorothy Stringer.

### **Class groups - are pupils from poorer backgrounds concentrated in 'lower' sets?**

Pupils in BACA, Hertford Juniors and Woodingdean were very positive about the opportunities for self-directed learning. In Moulsecoomb, St Nicolas, Downs Junior, and Patcham Junior, pupils enjoyed choosing tasks that were 'mild, hot or spicy' or with a 'chilli number'. These meant pupils were in control of their learning and there were no groupings that made children feel that they were 'second best'. Middle Street pupils value their learning buddies who help them. Pupils at St Paul's and St Peter's talked about the 'right way to learn well' being very important and West

Blatchington pupils valued their 'step groups'. Queens park have mixed groups and pupils said, 'everyone treats everyone well'.

### **Extra-curricular**

The majority of the schools organise trips for pupils to support and enhance the curriculum. There are a range of different strategies that parents and carers said work well to support those who may find paying for the trips challenging. Many schools such as Woodingdean give good notice and the opportunity to pay in instalments. Moulsecoomb subsidises the trips extensively to ensure all families can attend and Carlton Hill PTA contributes a sum to the school budget for trips. St Joseph's tries to make maximum use of the resources in the local community such as the local museums in Brighton and Hove to keep the cost down. St Mary Magdalen ensures that there is only one 'costly' trip each term and Hertford Juniors looks for good value options – eg they are having a sleepout at school. Some families talked about the support from school staff, such as the Business Manager at St Joseph's, who supports families in difficulty with payment plans. Downs Junior has calculated the cost of school visits for each year group for this year so they and parents / carers know the expected costs.

The majority of schools run out of school clubs. At Woodingdean and West Blatchington there is a large number of free clubs. The Woodingdean 'Health and Well-being Club in the mornings is very popular. Dorothy Stringer pupils report a huge variety of clubs that pupils enjoy.

### **Food**

At Patcham Junior pupils can eat with their friends and menus are all on line so families can plan food together in advance. Pupils at Mile Oak said how good the food is at their school.

No school visited had a system which made explicit to the school community which pupils were entitled to free school meals and those not. Dorothy Stringer –has a 'Meal Deal' so all students can have a full meal and drink, and this is within the FSM allowance.

The infant free school meal entitlement has caused some issues. Hertford Infants School asked for it to be delivered as a picnic, so the pupils can all enjoy the food together.

### **Homework - can everyone access it?**

Moulsecoomb and Queens Park offer support for families with homework to make sure that everyone can access the tasks, with computers available at school to use. Downs Infant makes sure that there is no pressure for resources. At Woodingdean the pupils and parents liked that in the summer term the homework was to 'spend time together as a family' rather than specific tasks.

## **Resources**

At Woodingdean the whole class share resources that are brought in for projects. At Moulsecomb there is an art club where children can make things for parents or teachers which give children opportunities to give gifts if they wish.

At Carlton Hill everything children need for school is provided and they also allow families to play in the school grounds after school with supervision as not all parent have places to play. They provide some costumes for dress up days.

Pencil cases are not a problem at St Margaret's where pupils love the 'pen packs' that the school give them to make sure they have everything they need and several schools said they liked it better when they didn't have to bring in pencil cases from home, as pupils sometimes compared and also there were fallouts about borrowing items.

## **Leadership and work of the governing body**

In Our Lady of Lourdes and Woodingdean there was a clear focus on needs of the disadvantaged. Both schools had up to date policies and regular reviews by governors. Governors attend pupil progress meetings to make sure that they know pupil performance in detail.

Some school leadership teams were particularly conversant with the data. Governors at Patcham Junior, Middle Street, St Nicolas, Benfield, Longhill and Dorothy Stringer were particularly aware of the performance of the disadvantaged and St Paul's has a governor an allocated Pupil Premium Champion Governor and the monitoring of the impact of provision is an agenda item for each governors meeting. Downs Junior has set up a Pupil Premium Grant Task Force consisting of a Pupil Premium Champion for each year group. They have appointed an attachment teacher who works with the pupils who are in receipt of the pupil premium plus grant. In addition, these pupils have been assigned a key adult who meets with them one a week to support them to develop their social and relationship skills.

Students and families spoke positively about their involvement in this area. Benfield has pupil premium champions, Patcham High have advocates for pupil premium. Middle Street include pupil in discussion about their progress and St Peter's allocate a proportion of the funding to families and ask them how they would like to use it.

## **Support for parents & families**

Many of the schools had very positive and trusting relationships with families which meant that parents were happy to come and talk to them if there was an issue. St Nicolas has a very strong sense of community, "We are all kind to each other and great friends". St Mary Magdalen Catholic Primary School offers courses to parents in a range of languages to ensure all can access information. Our Lady of Lourdes have found that employing a family support worker has been very positive. Carlton Hill has a notice board that signposts parents to a range of services they could find helpful. In Downs Junior, the pupils in the younger classes explained that they have a worry doll in their classrooms, "All you have to do is put your name on the worry

doll and your teacher will talk to you quietly about your worry”. The pupils in the older classes have feelings boxes where pupils can put their worries/explain how they are feeling into the box.

### **Uniform**

Positive comments about uniform from primary schools included:

- Uniform is easily available in common colours
- No pressure for logos
- Discreet second hand uniform available / pre loved uniform
- The junior school has the same uniform as the infant school
- For non-uniform days the cost is £1 per family, not per child which helps make it more affordable
- ‘special’ uniform – eg leavers hoodies, special polo shirts, funded by PTA
- Secondary schools had reviewed their uniform and had thought about: how to get best value and be smart yet practical

### **‘Other’**

Many schools have good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility – in West Blatchington this includes Young Interpreters, who support pupils with the same language.

Pupils from Benfield and Downs Infants were keen to talk about their futures and the choices they felt they had. Hertford Junior has linked with the University of Brighton. The pupils have mentors from the University and ‘Professor Gull’ comes to visit.

## **‘Poverty Proofing the School Day’ in Brighton & Hove Good Practice: Volume Two December 2018**

### **4. Introduction**

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### **5. Brighton & Hove**

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### **6. Examples of good practice in Brighton & Hove schools**

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 disadvantaged pupils. The teams of researchers have found many examples of good practice already existing in the city and designed to support vulnerable pupils and students to learn and achieve. It has been agreed that some examples would be share with the wider audience. These are some of the examples and are organised in the themes of questions that the Poverty Proofing audit explores. This is the second booklet, which includes examples from the following 21 schools, from May to December 2018. Every school has examples of great practice, so this can only be a snapshot. School leaders are very happy to be contacted to talk about their schools:

West Hove Infant School
St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School
Peter Gladwin Primary School
St Mary's Catholic Primary School
St Luke's Primary School
St Martin's CE Primary School
Balfour Primary School
Fairlight Primary School
Hove Park School
Cottesmore Catholic Primary School

Cardinal Newman Catholic School
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
Stanford Infant School
Stanford Junior School
Aldrington CE Primary School
Bilingual Primary School
St Andrew's CE Primary School
Goldstone Primary School
Hove Junior School
Varndean School
Pupil Referral Unit

### **Behaviour, rewards and attendance**

Pupils spoke most positively in schools where there are clear and consistent rewards. The vast majority of the schools had clear rewards for good behaviour and attendance. In West Hove Infant all the children knew the Golden Rules, and St Mary's pupils all knew their seven key learning skills. At Fairlight pupils have a learning ladder and at St Martin's and Cottesmore pupils are in the beehive, or are 'buzzed for learning'. St Luke's have a learning community system where pupils work together to reach community targets.

There is a wide range of rewards offered by schools. Pupils at St Bernadette's, Peter Gladwin, Varndean and Aldrington enjoy having tea with their headteachers. Stanford Infants have a special mention on the swan (which is the symbol of the school) and Aldrington celebrates their Christian values with a cup that is awarded. Students at the PRU have end of term reward trips for good behaviour.

Hove Junior pupils enjoy working together to achieve high attendance and pupils at Cardinal Newman talked about support they had received to help them with the attendance.

### **Anti-bullying / bullying**

Particularly strong practice was seen in this area across the city. The vast majority of pupils had a good understanding of what bullying is – especially in West Hove Infant and Hove Juniors and Fairlight. Several schools have playground buddies who support anti bullying, including Cottesmore, St Bernadette's and St Luke's and Stanford Infants and Juniors. At Cardinal Newman they have Pastoral Leaders for each year group and students are proud of the Anti-Bullying Ambassador (ABA) student body.

At Balfour pupils said that staff were on the lookout to make sure they were always safe and at Goldstone pupils felt that the headteacher always followed up any (rare) incidents with a reminder about how to get help and support.

## **Celebrations**

The audit explores the types of discussions and practices that take place around birthdays, holidays and special days. This is sometimes an area where children in poverty can feel left out. In many of the schools pupils sing happy birthday to each other and at St John's they also have a 'unicorn clap'. At Hove Juniors each class makes cards and at the beginning of the year and these are given to class members for their birthdays during the year.

At Christmas Santa Claus / Father Christmas gives all pupils a book (Peter Gladwin) or crackers with their Christmas meal (Stanford Juniors).

In the Bilingual school their safeguarding policy states that staff should not buy pupils presents. PTAs in many school support through funding leaver t shirts or hoodies and contributing to school activities which reduces the costs for families.

## **Class groups - are pupils from poorer backgrounds concentrated in 'lower' sets?**

Several schools, including Goldstone, Cottesmore Peter Gladwin the Bilingual Primary School and Aldrington talked about enjoying the 'chilli challenges' where they can choose their own level of challenge. Pupils at Balfour, Fairlight and St Bernadette's are also encouraged to choose the level of work they do. Stanford Infant changes the learning partners weekly and children say they like working with others, and St Andrew enjoy learning with their learning partners. At St Luke's they have peer tutoring from KS2 to KS1 and they have an embedded philosophy programme.

## **Extra-curricular**

All schools organise trips for pupils to support and enhance the curriculum. There are a range of different strategies that parents and carers said work well to support those who may find paying for the trips challenging. Several schools have business managers or support staff who work with parent to devise payment plans. West Hove Infant only have one paid trip a year and give lots of notice, all other trips are free. Varndean has a 'trip committee' comprising of senior leaders who must agree every trip that is offered at the school, that it is cost effective and that it links to one of the school's improvement objectives. St Luke's stresses the value of pupils coming on trips and has discussed this through a range of conversations with parents, including coffee mornings for groups of parents.

All schools have a range of extra curricular activities. Some school offer free clubs – for example St John's football club is free to attend and uniform is free to borrow. Cardinal Newman ensures that students who may struggle to source transport to sporting events are supported by providing transport. Some schools offer free places to families who might otherwise not be able to afford to attend. St Martin's supports families with payment plans and support, but their philosophy is that everyone contributes something.

Peter Gladwin has just consulted with parents about how many non uniform days they should have and the reasons behind why they have the days. St Luke have 'rainbow day', where pupils come wearing the colour for their year and some make a donation of food items, from which the PTA make hampers. This happens over a week and pupils can choose a day in the week that works for them. This also makes children not taking part less conspicuous.

When doing charity collections, St John the Baptist school, the Bilingual School, Varndean and Cottesmore have boxes / buckets where pupils bring in their donation and nobody knows what has been given. Aldrington makes it clear that it is an invitation to donate to the charity and there is no pressure.

West Hove Infant runs a 'pre loved book fair and St Bernadette's has a book swap where pupils bring 10p to take part.

St Martin's has 'breakfast café' every morning before school. This is based on the 'village in the playground' and the whole family can have breakfast, there is a bucket for donations and parents are asked to contribute the amount they feel happy with. There is also an outside library on offer at this time. So far, donations exceed the cost and parents are very positive about the offer of breakfast.

## **Food**

Several schools use 'parent pay' or other similar system, so no money comes into schools. At St Mary's the school business manager support families with payment plans to pay off debt. Fairlight won Kellogg's breakfast club of the year award in 2017.

Students at the PRU said toast is available on both sites for free if they have not had breakfast or if they are hungry at breaktime.

At Cardinal Newman, Students entitle to free school meals have the option of buying food at break time and lunch time. All Students receive a pass if they have forgotten their dinner money and this enables them to pay for their meal the following day. At Varndean the school canteen clearly labels the cost of all food items and displays possible meal deals that are available with the cost of a free school meal allowance. Therefore, students can budget and manage their money as there are a number of food combinations FSM and students living in poverty could afford. Students with the FSM entitlement are allowed to spend their allowance at breaktime. The cashless system means that students are not able to identify which students are entitled to FSM. There is a helpdesk every day in the canteen where students can go to if they have no money or have forgotten their card. All students will be offered a main meal even if they do not have enough credit.

## **Homework - can everyone access it?**

Several schools have home learning grids where pupils can choose which homework to do and all resources are provided, at Peter Gladwin, staff print out the table of activities for any pupils than need it. Several schools, including St Luke's, give pupils

all they need to do the homework tasks. Cottesmore run a free revision club in the Easter holidays. Goldstone made sure that most tasks don't need a computer, but provide computer access at school when they do.

### **Resources**

Several schools, including Hove Juniors West Hove Infants and St Mary's provide all materials pupils need and do not allow pencil cases in school as they have found this can cause issues.

St Martin's also provides cup and water so no water bottles are needed. The PTA at St Bernadette's' funds all materials needed for cooking.

At Stanford Infants they try to make sure everyone can take part in dress up days by stressing the fact that no special outfit is needed. They also consider why they are doing things for example for a Women in History topic, the staff dressed up as women from history and went round to the classes to talk about their lives.

### **Leadership and work of the governing body**

St Mary's won an award for the highest achieving school for pupils with disadvantage

West Hove Infants have reduced the cost of the school by cutting back on some of the costs. They have Disadvantage Champions and regular pupil conferencing to find out what pupils feel they need to help their learning. At St Luke's they are striving to be as easy to reach as possible for parents and have special meetings with families of pupils in disadvantage to aim to make sure they have everything they need. Hove junior target families

Most of the schools know their families very well- like Goldstone St John the Baptist, Peter Gladwin Stanford infants. St Andrew's have staff members to support vulnerable families such as the attachment coordinator and the pastoral care coordinator. In Aldrington the DHT is a PP leader and she makes sure pupils and families have what they need. Staff at St Martin's have a good understanding of the situations their families face and support and signpost grants and services.

School leaders told us that Varndean has invested: in CPD through working with the teaching school alliance it is part of on a number of research projects such as higher prior attaining students entitled to Pupil Premium (PP), unconscious bias and effective pedagogy for PP learners. The school is also working as a triad with 2 other local schools where a day is spent in each school, undertaking learning walks, talking to students entitled to PP and sharing best practice.

Schools with poverty proofing researchers such as Balfour, Dorothy Stringer Fairlight and Stanford Infants make use of the skills of the researchers to review aspects of school life and ask questions.

### **Support to parents & families**

Many of the schools had very positive and trusting relationships with families which meant that parents were happy to come and talk to them if there was an issue. All

school had positive comments from parent in this area. Parents were positive about the open door policy. At St Martin's the church works with the school to provide support to families

### **Transport**

Many of the schools engage with the Big Pedal and 'Bike it Ben' and give opportunities for pupils to have bike training free of charge and arrange it so all pupils have access to a bike.

St Martin's sometimes brings pupils to school when they know there are difficulties.

### **Uniform**

Positive comments about uniform from primary schools included:

- Uniform is easily available in common colours
- No pressure for logos
- Relaxed about shoes / trainers, acknowledging that some children and young people have one pair of shoes.
- Discreet second hand uniform available / pre loved uniform
- For non uniform days there is a central place for pupils to make a voluntary donation
- 'special' uniform – eg leavers hoodys, special polo shirts, funded by PTA
- Frequent preloved or 'new to you' school uniform sales
- Donating all the unnamed lost property for parents to collect
- Secondary schools had reviewed their uniform and had thought about: how to get best value and be smart yet practical

### **Wellbeing and social and emotional support**

Pupils in many schools have access to emotional support. West Hove Infants has daily mindfulness sessions. St Bernadette's and St John the Baptist have regular mindfulness sessions and St Mary's and Cottesmore have mediation as part of the school day. Several schools have worry boxes that pupils can use, including Hove Junior, St Bernadette's. Stanford infants and the Bilingual school have bubble time where pupils can have time to talk about what worries them with an adult.

### **Other**

Many schools have good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility – St John the Baptist has a wide range of roles pupils can take on. Peter Gladwin has 'voice groups' where pupils choose mission to improve the school these have included 'The Elderly and Me' and 'Hectic Historians'.

Many schools have talked with their pupils about options for their futures. Fairlight has good links with university where pupils can visit and see what they could access. Vandean and Cardinal Newman have partnerships with local universities. Students have access to University run courses including study skills workshops, art and science visits.