

Disadvantaged Students Impact Commentary 2021-22

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Shared with:

- Richard Cregan (SEND Link Governor) – 4th November 2022
- Quality of Education Committee – 9th November 2022

Reflections on academic year 2021/22

Our resolution over the past year to maintain a high-quality curriculum has been aided by investment in additional suites of laptops, classroom visualisers, mini whiteboards, learning guides to support self-study, career input and our greatest resource of all, teaching staff. To further support our disadvantaged students and to promote equity of opportunity, financial support has been given to activities week, school trips, literacy support, use of online platforms and subscriptions, instrument lessons, uniform purchase and material subsidies in some areas of the curriculum (e.g., Food Tech, Design & Technology).

As a result of these combined and concerted efforts the P8 for our outgoing Year 11 cohort was up significantly on the 2019 data (when students last sat exams) across all key areas, namely, English, Maths, EBacc and the Open Bucket.

However, the overall attendance figure for disadvantaged students compared to their non-disadvantaged peers is still too low and falls below the benchmark we set ourselves within the strategy of 94%. That said, the attendance gap between this cohort and their non-eligible peers is closing in response to our refined monitoring system and mindful of the recent DfE guidance (Working together to improve school attendance - Sept '22).

Our strategy seeks to build positive and transparent relationships with our harder to reach parents and carers by promoting positive home/school liaison through open communication and increased engagement. Our 'Meet the Teacher' evening is one such example of this, along with Pupil Progress Evenings. The target we set to achieve 60% representation of Pupil Premium students at each Year Group's event is improving and in the case of Year 9, 64% made appointments. However, there is still work to be done to convert booked time slots into attended appointments. During the early part of the academic year these events were held online which, by their very nature, seemed less personal - we are enjoying welcoming parents/carers back into college to converse face to face.

The percentage of Fixed Term Exclusions represented by the disadvantaged cohort is still too high. Our 3-year aim is to see this reduce so that the cohort receives proportionally no more FTEs (now known as Fixed Term Suspensions) than their non-eligible peers. We are working diligently to this end, ultimately to reduce fixed term suspensions across the board. The difference between the two cohorts currently being 5%.

Over the course of the year, we have triangulated evidence from multiple sources of data including assessments, engagement in class, book scrutiny, conversations with parents, students and teachers in order to identify the challenges faced by disadvantaged pupils - the assimilation of this feedback is both formal and informal and is an integral part of the school's monitoring calendar. We used the EEF's guidance to help us develop our strategy and it remains a key point of reference for the implementation of our ongoing activities.

Following the appointment of a new Principal, the college is in the process of developing a robust evaluation framework to span the remaining two years of our three-year approach and we will adjust our plan over time to secure better outcomes for our disadvantaged students alongside the wider school community.

