

# The Pupil Premium and New Marske Primary School

“Newly in post as Headteacher of New Marske Primary School, I noticed how the same families struggled to get their children to school on time. On many days each week, some children were late in settling down and missing valuable quarters of an hour of learning time,” John Dooris told the Local Governors Association at their termly meeting in November 2014.

Fortunately, the sum of money being received for Free School Meals children under the Pupil Premium was increasing; this gave John and the Governors the scope to develop initiatives to help bridge the attainment gap between these children and their better-off peers. This gap is a current national focus of Ofsted inspectors.

“I must say, however, that while these have worked for us, there is no one set way to spend the Pupil Premium effectively,” continued John. “It’s important to study the impact of every aspect of the resource allocation.”

New Marske Primary School is average sized, with 261 children, including the Nursery. It has a below average number of Pupil Premium pupils (46 children, i.e. 20%). However, there was a significant, increasing gap between the achievement of Pupil Premium and non Pupil Premium pupils in Reading, Writing and Maths at Level 4 and above: (2012: 26.5%, 2013: 30%). Attendance was only 94.6% in 2013 and there was a significant number of ‘Late before register has closed’ entries, with Pupil Premium pupils making up a large proportion of this. Pupils regarded as more able were often not Pupil Premium pupils; there was a lack of level 5 achievement by the latter. Teachers were spending a lot of time contacting parents regarding attendance, lack of homework and consistency with reading at home.

With support from the governing body, John used the Pupil Premium funding to employ a 17.5 hours a week Parental Support Worker (PSW). Her duties included liaising with parents to establish a relationship between home and school, supporting homework, reading, attendance and behaviour. She discussed issues with struggling families, whom she also specifically invited to the Breakfast Club. She worked with a Reading Recovery trained Higher Level Teaching Assistant to devise a programme of support for targeted underperforming Pupil Premium children.

John explained that the PSW contacted other agencies to look at support in school for reading and behaviour. At present Middlesbrough Football Club is supporting two classes with large numbers of Pupil Premium pupils to look at developing a positive approach to reading in Year 1 and and a Health and Fitness programme in Year 5. The PSW worked with the Senior Leadership Team to look at issues regarding Year 5 and how provision could be adapted to remove barriers to learning. She is aware of the data and discusses ideas with senior leaders and governors.

Pupil Premium funding has been used to run the Breakfast Club within school. It pays for a supervisor and an assistant for 7.5 hours per week. Funding is used to purchase the food, with any additional monies from paying pupils supplementing this. All Pupil Premium pupils can attend free of charge, with other pupils paying £2.50 per week, per family. At present around 72% (33 pupils) of the Pupil Premium pupils attend the Breakfast Club, which has contributed to impressive results.

Last year, overall attendance increased from 94.6% to 96.7% and 'Late after register closed' entries decreased from 0.76% to 0.56%. Illness has reduced from 3.6% to 2.4%. At the same time, the school has analysed Pupil Premium data more closely and teachers are now much more aware of who their Pupil Premium children are and exactly how they are progressing. John stressed how vital it is for all staff to know the pupils well and Learning Support Assistants attend PD Days and staff meetings.

In May 2014, Ofsted noticed significant improvements: "*There is much better provision and outcomes for pupils entitled to pupil premium funding. Attendance and punctuality have improved*". The gap between attainment of Free School Meals and non Free School Meals pupils at Level 4 and above shrank from 30% in 2013 to 15% in 2014. Level 5 attainment in Reading rose from 0% in 2013 to 22.2%.

Chair of Governors, Yvonne Joy added: "The Resources Committee receives a separate sheet detailing how the Pupil Premium is being spent and this then passes to the Curriculum Committee. That's how the governing body makes sure the money is being spent appropriately and by looking at anonymised data, we can assess its impact. We are confident that our initiatives are making a difference."

Rosemary Nicholls  
Secretary of Redcar and Cleveland Local Governors' Association