­­**Whole school culture and engagement**

### Tackling Educational Disadvantage (TED) ­­Self-evaluation

### Green Section: Whole school culture and engagement

#### July 2023

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# SERVICES FOR SCHOOLS

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| **A strong moral purpose and belief** | **Strength/****Priority?** | **Responses and reflections*** How do you know?
* What evidence do you have?
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| **1a** | Are actions driven by moral purpose, rather than operational compliance, ensuring that our accountability is to the pupils? |  |  |
| **1b** | To what extent do staff genuinely believe that all pupils can be successful, believing that their actions can genuinely improve pupils’ experiences, well-being, outcomes and life chances? |  |  |
| **1c** | To what extent do all staff remain curious about what learners can achieve? |  |  |
| **1d** | Do staff value pupils’ diverse strengths and characteristics, adopting a strengths-based approach, rather than a deficit model? |  |  |
| **1e** | Do staff understand the impact of low family income on school life?  |  |  |

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| **What some schools do:** | **Exemplification** |
| Include all staff in collaborative development of school strategy and policy, so that staff believe in the actions. | * Many schools have shared the positive impact of collaboratively developing strategies, such as the pupil premium strategy or relationships policy, with staff. Staff bring their expertise and greater ‘buy-in’ is established. Strategy and policy are ‘lived, not laminated’.
* Some schools actively engage families, pupils, and the wider community in these decisions in order to create a shared sense of agency.
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| Agree a shared language when discussing pupils and families, challenging each other when language does not fit with the school’s core principles. | * Leaders have shared their experience of consciously challenging language, such as *‘low ability’*, *‘challenging families’*, ‘*PP kids’* etc, so that staff can unpick unconscious bias and stereotyping.
* Some schools do not use the term ‘*disadvantaged pupils’*, as it feels like a fixed label, instead adopting language that they feel provides a fairer representation of their pupils’ experiences.
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| Limit the use of the label *‘pupil premium’*. | * Some schools have chosen to share information about which pupils receive pupil premium funding with senior and middle leaders, but not with teachers and teaching assistants, in order to mitigate against unconscious bias and to focus on knowing every child rather than labels.
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| Shape pupil progress meetings so that a strengths-based model is used. | * Rather than starting with gaps in learning, conversations always start with what is going well and pupils’ individual strengths. The ‘Catch your learners doing the right thing’ model on page 35 of NASEN’s [Teacher Handbook: SEND](https://nasen.org.uk/news/teacher-handbook-launched) is a useful model.
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| Develop belief that all pupils can achieve, by sharing school-specific examples. | * Some schools repeatedly share case-studies of their pupils’ successes, sharing the pupils’ experience so that staff can learn from them, increasing belief that their actions can impact significantly on pupils’ lives.
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| **A sense of belonging** | **Strength/****Priority?** | **Responses and reflections*** How do you know?
* What evidence do you have?
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| **2a** | To what extent do staff, pupils, and families, particularly those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, feel that they belong in the school community? |  |  |
| **2b** | Do pupils and staff have positive, trusting, reciprocal relationships, and are these relationships proactively established and nurtured by all? |  |  |
| **2c** | To what extent are pupils and staff actively involved in wider school life, engaging with assemblies, performances, visits andextra-curricular activities? |  |  |

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| **What some schools do:** | **Exemplification** |
| Ensure staff provide a warm and friendly welcome to school/lessons for all pupils/families. | * In many schools, leaders are actively present on the school gate to welcome pupils and families, actively speaking with and seeking feedback from those who may find it harder to engage with school. The focus is on positive interactions and relationship building.
* Some schools have ensured that teachers stand separately during school drop-off or pick-up, so they do not end up speaking to each other or appearing less approachable. Rachel McFarlane writes about this in her book, *Obstetrics for Schools*. Teachers have also changed their physical location (moving down a set of steps for example), in order to engage with families in a more neutral way.
* Similarly, some schools have agreed ways of welcoming pupils to lessons, emphasising positive interactions.
* In one school visit, free toast and fruit was made available to all pupils and families as they arrived at school.
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| Embed a relational policy rather than a behaviour policy, so that everyone understands how relationships are developed and nurtured across the school. | * Increasingly, schools are developing trauma-informed practice, focusing on developing positive relationships with those who need it most. This often includes ways of engaging with pupils when they are struggling to self-regulate. Some schools also focus on engaging in a trauma-informed way with staff and families.
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| Create systems to ensure families and pupils regularly receive positive feedback and experience success. | * Schools have focused on ensuring families receive regular positive feedback such as success post cards, phone calls or text messages. In some cases, this has meant providing mentors for key pupils/families so that positive interactions are happening on a regular basis.
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| **What some schools do:** | **Exemplification** |
| Engage with families through home visits or 1:1 meetings. | * Home visits are common in the early years, but some schools are increasing their use in order to develop relationships with families.
* In one example, a secondary headteacher meets all families before pupils arrive in year 7.
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| Give pupils, families and staff a say in decisions, actively seeking feedback. | * Opportunities for parents to have a say are provided through informal interactions and formal meeting opportunities, but also through polling software or ‘voting stations’ placed in communal areas. This may just involve putting a token in a pot to vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’.
* Some schools capture feedback from key stakeholders and follow this up with information about what has been done in response, so that everyone can see that their views are being listened to.
* Some schools focus on asking families what the school can do for them to ensure that the conversation does not always focus on what the families should be doing for the school.
* Some schools offer families bespoke support and ask if this support would be useful. This way there is not an over reliance on parents finding a solution. It builds a partnership and shared sense of agency.
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| Provide support for families through funded breakfast clubs/after school activities | * Many schools offer a free breakfast club for pupils that may benefit. It can be a great opportunity for children to experience a more gradual start to the school day, to have a healthy breakfast, and to build key relationships, whilst also supporting parents to juggle the morning routine.
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| **What some schools do:** | **Exemplification** |
| Focus on ‘poverty proofing’ the school day (see the [Children North East website](https://children-ne.org.uk/how-we-can-help/poverty-proofing-services/) for more information). | * Examples of ‘poverty proofing’ include providing lunch boxes for pupils in receipt of free school meals when they go on school trips (rather than highlighting poverty by providing lunches in a paper bag) and providing parents with information about costs for the school year in advance, so that payments can be spread out or provided support.
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| Support the engagement of the full school community in a rich extra-curricular experience. | * Some schools have very established programmes of extra-curricular activities with staff sharing areas of interest and pupils leading their own clubs too. This allows for knowledge, skills, and relationships to be developed, as well as engaging everyone in wider school life.
* Similarly, some schools focus on offering pupils and families rich experiences that they may not otherwise experience, such as a Christmas pantomime and meal or community BBQ.
* Some schools have reported that targeted invitations for specific pupils to join in have been more effective than universal offers.
* Some schools have identified missing information in terms of which children are attending extra-curricular clubs. This data is now collected and is being used to assess need, make plans to increase attendance and to monitor impact.
* Leaders are involving the wider school staff such as lunchtime assistants, administrative staff and site managers in CPD that is relevant so that all staff can understand their role in delivering the strategy. These staff are also encouraged to attend performances and support extra-curricular activities.
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| **Open and honest reflection** | **Strength/****Priority?** | **Responses and reflections*** How do you know?
* What evidence do you have?
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| **3a** | Does the pupil premium strategy honestly reflect the school’s context and work? Is it focused on improving the lived experiences and outcomes for pupils, rather than meeting statutory requirements? |  |  |
| **3b** | To what extent are self-evaluation and implementation ongoing processes rather than events?  |  |  |
| **3c** | Are the views of all stakeholders actively sought and used to inform self-evaluation and resulting strategy, even when some of these views may be difficult to hear? |  |  |
| **3d** | To what extent are staff and pupils reflective and open about what they do not understand, or find challenging? Are leaders and teachers outward looking, seeking advice and feedback? |  |  |
| **3e** | To what extent is there a safe learning culture for pupils and adults, without fear of failure? Are teachers and pupils prepared to take risks? |  |  |

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| **What some schools do:** | **Exemplification** |
| Include all staff in collaborative development of school strategy and policy, so that a range of information, views and experiences are used to inform the strategy. Collective responsibility and staff agency are consistent features of schools where disadvantaged pupils are thriving. | * Many schools have shared the positive impact of collaboratively developing strategies with staff, such as the pupil premium strategy or relationships policy. These strategies are likely to reflect the experiences of the school community more honestly.
* Some schools actively engage families, pupils and the wider community in these decisions in order to create a shared sense of agency.
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| Monitor and evaluate on a daily basis (as well as following a more formal monitoring programme), informally getting into lessons, speaking with staff, pupils and families, and reflecting together with the wider school community. | * Most schools we work in use this model of monitoring and evaluation. What can differ is how open and honest the school community is when reflecting on things that are not working and listening to the views of all stakeholders. There is little sense of ‘ego’ in schools most successful with this cohort of pupils. Evaluation is decoupled from accountability.
 |
| Share failures as part of the learning process. | * School staff have spoken about the positive impact of apologising when things go wrong. Leaders share their failures to encourage staff and pupils to do the same and to learn from these.
 |
| Seek external viewpoints and reviews to support them in identifying strengths and areas to develop. | * Many schools have an ‘open door’ policy, inviting colleagues from other schools, external agencies and the local authority to visit to learn from their practice and to provide feedback. Leaders often comment on the importance of having an external view in identifying issues that may otherwise have been missed.
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| **A learning culture for all** | **Strength/****Priority?** | **Responses and reflections*** How do you know?
* What evidence do you have?
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| **4a** | To what extent is there a shared understanding of what is meant by ‘high-quality, inclusive teaching and learning’? Are staff clear about which aspects of teaching and learning require most attention? |  |  |
| **4b** | To what extent is the school’s CPD offer methodically planned to ensure that:* A small number of priorities are revisited over time, in greater depth.
* CPD develops teachers’ collective efficacy.
* Approaches are adapted to meet the needs of different teachers, including staff new to the school.
* Pupils’ needs are met.
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| **4c** | To what extent does everyone in the school community invest in their own learning, and that of others, believing attainment is never fixed? Is this reflected in practice and in the language used? |  |  |
| **4d** | To what extent are a wide variety of research and information used to inform thinking, challenging existing beliefs, assumptions, and approaches? |  |  |
| **What some schools do:** | **Exemplification** |
| Use a defined model/s of pedagogy  | * Some schools choose to focus their teaching and learning work on a defined model such as Rosenshine’s principles of instruction, Kagan Cooperative Learning strategies or those defined in books such as, ‘*Making Every Lesson Count’ and ‘Teaching Backwards’ by Andy Griffith. Organisations such as* [*Voice 21*](https://voice21.org/membership-2/) *also provide training and reflective visits for schools that engage with their programme.* This can help to provide clear consistent messaging about what the school views as good pedagogy.
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| Ensure that professional development runs over years to deepen learning and to ensure it leads to changes in practice. | * In one visited research school, a key pedagogical approach used by the school ran through all CPD, year on year. Despite having relatively stable staffing, the head reflected that, to do it really well, staff needed to be reflecting on their practice and deepening learning. The [EEF’s Professional development guidance report](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development) provides a really useful tool to reflect on whether your CPD contains all of the ‘mechanisms’ needed to make a difference to practice.
* The Guskey model of professional development evaluation breaks down the different stages of impact from participants’ reactions to student learning outcomes. Explore our [Impact Evaluation video](https://hias-moodle.mylearningapp.com/pluginfile.php/2811/course/section/986/Ted%20-%20Impact%20Evaluation.mp4?time=1683225659802) on the TED Moodle page.
* Many schools adapt CPD over years so that the staff who need it get direct instruction (such as staff new to the school), but for other staff the focus is more on mentoring, coaching or learning communities.
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| **What some schools do:** | **Exemplification** |
| Explore the impact of classroom pedagogy through the eyes of the pupils who are doing less well in the school. Use experts to model best-practice for these pupils. | * By exploring pedagogy in this way, leaders are able to pull out the areas that are likely to have most impact on learning for the pupils who need it most.
* SENCOs can be a big support, getting into classrooms to model best practice for pupils with SEND – practice that may be beneficial for other pupils too.
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| Avoid the language of ‘ability’.  | * Leaders have reflected that by simply challenging the language of ‘ability’, staff are reflecting more on fixed mindsets and unconscious bias. In these schools, staff talk about ‘current attainment’. Interventions focus on the learning needs rather than a label.
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| Exploring research beyond the EEF | * Some schools are insisting on moving beyond the research evidence of the Education Endowment Foundation, ensuring that a wide range of evidence is informing strategy. Explore pages 7 and 8 of [Wilbury Primary’s pupil premium strategy](https://www.wilburyprimaryschool.org.uk/app/uploads/2023/01/PPPlan-Wilbury2022-25UpdatedDec22.pdf) as an example.
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| **Robust implementation, monitoring and evaluation** | **Strength/****Priority?** | **Responses and reflections*** How do you know?
* What evidence do you have?
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| **5a** | To what extent do all staff and governors understand the school’s strategy for tackling educational disadvantage and their role and accountability within it?  |  |  |
| **5b** | Are leaders focused on doing fewer things more effectively based on need, targeting strategies where the school can have most impact? |  |  |
| **5c** | Is time invested in the exploration phase, identifying and prioritising challenges faced by pupils and how these might be addressed?  |  |  |
| **5d** | Have leaders created clear success criteria, based on learning outcomes (not activity), so that impact can be measured robustly enabling appropriate response? |  |  |
| **5e** | To what extent is the process of implementation and evaluation ongoing? Are leaders quick to respond when it is clear that strategies are not having impact or need to be changed? |  |  |

**(Exemplified within previous pages)**