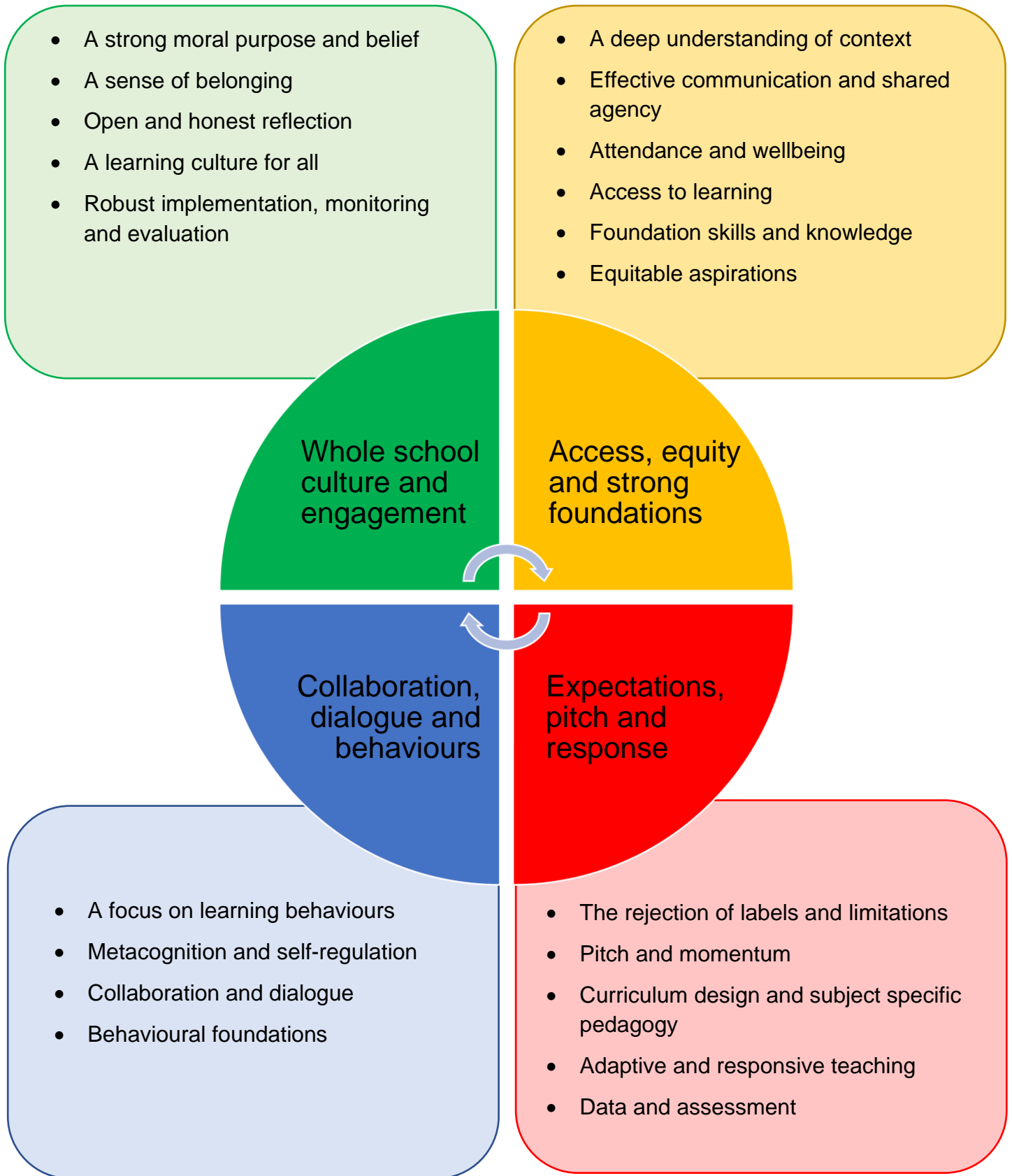Hampshire
Services
HIAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Tackling Educational Disadvantage (TED) Guidance

Yellow section: Access, equity, and strong foundations

Revised 2023

Hampshire
County Council

www.hants.gov.uk

The Four Core Sections

- A strong moral purpose and belief
- A sense of belonging
- Open and honest reflection
- A learning culture for all
- Robust implementation, monitoring and evaluation

- A deep understanding of context
- Effective communication and shared agency
- Attendance and wellbeing
- Access to learning
- Foundation skills and knowledge
- Equitable aspirations

Whole school culture and engagement

Access, equity and strong foundations

Collaboration, dialogue and behaviours

Expectations, pitch and response

- A focus on learning behaviours
- Metacognition and self-regulation
- Collaboration and dialogue
- Behavioural foundations

- The rejection of labels and limitations
- Pitch and momentum
- Curriculum design and subject specific pedagogy
- Adaptive and responsive teaching
- Data and assessment

Access, equity and strong foundations

Every school, cohort, and pupil is different. Schools have a deep understanding of the factors that influence the learning, progress, and attainment of their pupils, addressing challenges and inequalities to create a safe culture of opportunity for all.

> **Building block:** The school culture is one of high aspiration for all; focusing on attainment and equity of access to a range of provision.

A deep understanding of context

- The school's vision and strategic plan are based on a solid understanding of the school's specific context and needs of individual cohorts.
- The school makes the necessary adaptations to meet the needs of different cohorts, in terms of both curricular and pastoral needs.
- Schools fully assess the strengths, needs and challenges of their school and local community, rather than making assumptions.
- Time is given to fully exploring strengths and prioritising the needs that pupils experiencing disadvantage face in the school's specific context. This is both at cohort and individual pupil level.
- Focus is given to those challenges where the school can have most impact.

> 66 *Everything works somewhere and nothing works everywhere."*
>
> *Dylan Wiliam, Assessment for Learning: why, what and how (2009)*

> **Building block:** There is a good understanding of the experiences of growing up as a disadvantaged child or young person in the community.

> **Building block:** School leaders and teachers recognise and respond to the needs of different cohorts and pupils; they recognise that a strategy that is successful one year may not be successful another year and adjust accordingly.

> **Building block:** There is a strong, universal understanding of the barriers that can be faced by disadvantaged pupils, how those barriers present in the classroom, and how they can be tackled.

Effective communication and shared agency

- Staff engage positively with, and therefore understand and support pupils, families, and the community, consciously rejecting assumptions and stereotypes.
- The school actively reaches out to pupils and families, seeking honest feedback, asking what is working, what support is needed, and actively working to meet these needs.
- These approaches to relationship building are seen as key aspects of engaging parents and carers in their child's education.
- Communication with parents and carers builds a sense of shared agency, providing clear information, seeking specific action, and using simple, positive language.
- Pupils and families are supported in recognising when they may not feel safe and happy and trust the school to support them during these times.
- The school creates a culture of meaningful participation for all.

> 66 *Across four major meta-analyses that investigated the impact of different forms of family engagement, the ways that families demonstrate the importance of education was the largest predictor of student achievement."*
>
> *Flamboyan Foundation, What kinds of family engagement are most effective? (2021)*

Building block: Pupils and their families experiencing disadvantage are valued equally to others. There is a clear commitment on the part of the school to work in genuine partnership with families, to achieve the best outcomes for pupils.

> 66 *Rogers (1959) believed that for a person to "grow", they need an environment that provides them with genuineness (openness and self-disclosure), acceptance (being seen with unconditional positive regard), and empathy (being listened to and understood).*
>
> *Saul McLeod, Simply Psychology [blog], Carl Rogers: Founder of The Humanistic Approach to Psychology, 2023*

Attendance and wellbeing

- All staff understand their role in ensuring high levels of attendance as a fundamental requirement for pupils to access the curriculum and to keep them safe.

- Schools focus on preventing absence as well as being responsive when attendance issues emerge.

- All staff understand that the school's culture and curriculum sit at the heart of strong attendance.

- Staff seek to understand reasons for attendance difficulties, taking action within school and supporting families to improve school attendance. Strong relationships sit at the heart of this work.

- There is a whole-school approach to supporting pupils returning from absence.

- Schools take practical steps to address the issues that can arise from poverty such as hunger, a lack of equipment and clean uniform.

- Systems across the school actively develop pupils' and the staff's physical and mental health and well-being, focusing on prevention of issues, as well as response.

- Pupils are given opportunities to move across the school day and for varied purposes, including to play, learn, develop physical confidence and control and for social interaction and health.

- Pupils are provided with strategies and encouraged to talk about how they feel, mainstreaming conversations about their mental wellbeing.

- Schools engage with external expertise when supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

> **"** *Securing good attendance cannot […] be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium."*
>
> *DFE, Working together to improve school attendance (2022)*

Access to learning

Building block: Equal access to high-quality teaching and learning is at the forefront of decisions and organisation; it is recognised as a key to success for disadvantaged learners.

- Pupils experiencing disadvantage are a priority group when making decisions about access to the curriculum and the most effective teaching.
- Behaviour is not a limiting factor that directs the grouping a pupil is placed in.
- Inclusive pedagogy includes opportunities for collaborative learning, peer-to-peer tutoring, and flexible grouping as well as direct instruction, modelling, deliberate practice, and independent application of learning.
- Classroom strategies and additional support are deliberately targeted to help pupils to become better learners, enabling greater access to the curriculum.
- Additional one-to-one/small group interventions are time limited and ensure exposure to the curriculum and high-quality teaching and learning are not compromised but supported.
- Intervention programmes are implemented by appropriately trained staff and evaluated through well-defined impact measures.

> 66 *The most important school-level factor for pupil attainment is teacher effectiveness: evidence shows that the difference between being taught by a good versus bad teacher is equivalent to a whole year of learning for disadvantaged pupils."*
>
> *Key Drivers of the Disadvantage Gap: Literature Review, Education Policy Institute*

Building block: Intervention strategies are carefully determined based on individual need, are regularly reviewed for impact, and do not compromise exposure to high quality teaching and learning/other curricular areas; they are additional and extra.

Building block: Careful consideration is given to how groups of pupils and learning are organised and how resources such as learning assistants are deployed and equipped to maximise their impact.

Foundation skills and knowledge

- Teaching and learning routinely takes account of, and seeks to improve, pupils' subject-specific and tier two vocabulary, foundation reading and writing skills, and disciplinary literacy. One-to-one and small group interventions are also used to target need in these areas.
- Schools prioritise the development of pupils' spoken language, seeking to improve both listening comprehension and oral expression.

> 66 *While all students benefit from classroom discussion activities, talk also appears to be particularly beneficial for low attaining students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds."*
>
> *EEF, Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools (2021)*

Building block: The importance of language and vocabulary development is given high status; this forms part of the strategy across all subject areas and curricular experiences.

- Teaching and learning routinely takes account of and seeks to improve pupils' numeracy skills. This includes a focus on number fluency, mathematical reasoning and developing both a conceptual and procedural understanding of mathematical concepts through the concrete, pictorial, abstract approach. One-to-one and small group interventions are also used to target need in these areas.
- Value is placed on the cultural capital, life skills and experiences that pupils bring.
- Robust systems are in place to address gaps in cultural knowledge and experiences, empowering all pupils to access the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and opportunities beyond school.
- The curriculum is ambitious in challenge for all.

Building block: The curriculum offer is wide and varied for all and reflects the importance of cultural capital.

Building block: Recruitment of committed teachers and support staff is fundamental to a consistent, inclusive experience of school.

Equitable aspirations

- Schools are open to a wide variety of aspirational pathways rather than focusing on a defined view of high aspirations. The focus is on ensuring pupils are empowered to have choice.

- Leaders and teachers understand that a key block to high aspirations is insufficient means to achieve these aspirations and therefore support pupils and families to overcome barriers.

- Pupils' eyes are opened to the full range of future pathways and practical support is provided to enable pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and characteristics required to achieve their goals.

- The school's high and equitable aspirations for all pupils are fully evident in curriculum, day-to-day practice, and behaviours.

> " *Some studies have shown that most young people already have high aspirations, suggesting that much underachievement results not from low aspiration but from a gap between aspirations and the knowledge, skills, and characteristics required to achieve them.*"
>
> *EEF, Aspiration interventions (2021)*

Potential Barriers

If...	then...
pupils and families are stereotyped...	teachers do not engage with all pupils and parents equally.
negative judgements about pupils and their families are made or expressed…	the belief prevails that barriers cannot be overcome, with pupils and families feeling unsupported by the school.
families experience more negative interactions with school than positive (i.e., regular phone calls home about missed homework) …	they are unlikely to view the school positively and to engage in a positive way.
common barriers to learning for pupils experiencing disadvantage are not identified and actions not defined…	teachers are driven to raise attainment for pupils experiencing disadvantage, without a shared understanding of how to do this. Teachers may feel that the expectation of high attainment for pupils experiencing disadvantage is unachievable.
when addressing attendance challenges, and those linked to physical and emotional wellbeing, the focus remains on responsive action rather than prevention…	schools continue to tackle the symptoms rather than the cause and change is unlikely to happen on a large scale.
the basic skills and learning behaviours required to enable access to the curriculum are not clearly defined and taught…	pupils may show a lack of motivation, general disinterest in the subject matter, and a lack of engagement in class discussions. This can lead to pupils being viewed as having behavioural issues.
teachers make assumptions about contextual understanding and language and experiences that pupils may or may not have….	key learning opportunities are missed, and pupils struggle to access the curriculum.
assessment does not effectively identify, and planning does not effectively deal with, key gaps in prior learning…	pupils have rocky foundations and learning is less likely to 'stick'.

If…	then…
gaps in pupils' literacy and numeracy are not effectively identified or addressed…	pupils are unable to fully access the curriculum.
the role of developing literacy/numeracy is viewed as the responsibility of others (for example, subject specialists or the SENCo) …	pupils are unlikely to make significant progress in these areas.
not all staff have the subject knowledge or understanding of effective pedagogy to close these specific gaps in learning…	teaching will not meet needs of the pupils and progress will be limited.
some pupils are involved in interventions outside the classroom for long periods of time…	teachers may be less able to support the pupil through effective assessment for learning.
interventions are not informed by the teacher and fed back into lessons…	they are unlikely to have sustained impact.
some pupils spend considerable time with the teacher or teaching assistant...	pupils access less peer-to-peer dialogue and may be less independent in their thinking and less aware of their own and others' metacognition. Pupils may spend more time with a teaching assistant than the class teacher, meaning that the teacher is less able to meet their needs.
pupils are not exposed to the full range of educational and employment pathways and believe their pathway is fixed…	pupils' aspirations for their future are likely to be limited.
the curriculum is designed without listening to the full range of pupils…	the curriculum may not be relevant or engaging for all.
the cost of curriculum enrichment activities is prohibitive for some families...	pupils may miss out on learning and relationship building opportunities