Poverty Proofing the School Day Report and Action Plan

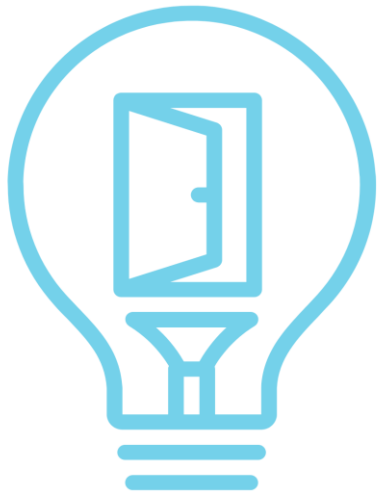**Ebchester CE Primary School**
June 2023

Children North East — Poverty Proofing ©

Contents

Introduction

Summary of Ebchester CE Primary School

What is working well?	What are the key issues pupils face?	Key Recommendations
Additional Opportunities: Enhancing pupils' cultural capital is important to Ebchester C of E Primary School. All after school clubs are free and school pays for 3 educational visits within the year and residential trips are subsidised.	**Celebrations:** There are a number of celebrations over the school year that can potentially cost families money, including a Halloween disco, Easter egg decorating, year 6 leavers and pupil birthdays.	**Celebrations:** Look at ways to reduce costs linked to celebrations. Could school have a supply of Halloween costumes for pupils to borrow so families don't feel the need to buy something for the disco?
Leadership and Governance: Staff have a good awareness and understanding of issues relating to poverty, and what the school Pupil Premium funding is spent on.	**Charity, Fundraising and Community:** The pupils spoke about a number of charity and fundraising events that can put unnecessary financial pressure onto families.	**Charity, Fundraising and Community:** At the start of the academic year, choose which charities you are going to support and limit the number. Ensure that families are made aware of charity events in advance so they can budget for them. Ensure the PTA are aware of Poverty Proofing © strategies. [Cost of the School Day calendar 2023-24 | CPAG](#)
Pupil Support: The majority of pupils feel supported by the school and know that they can talk to any member of staff if they have any worries.	**Food:** Pupils said that they are hungry during the school day. Many pupils are hungry at break time but don't bring in a snack from home.	**Food:** Consider contacting your local supermarket for a weekly donation of biscuits and or fruit that could be put out at break time for all pupils to help themselves too.

Background

Methodology

The findings represent a summary of what people told us. Children North East staff spoke to all pupils at **Ebchester CE Primary School** We explored what is poverty in a UK context; do they know who experiences poverty in their school? And if so how do they know? The researcher examined the school day from start to finish unpicking all policies and practices within the school. They attended after school club, had lunch with pupils and observed pupils through their day to day interactions within school. See findings below for more detailed analysis of the pupils' responses.

We also spoke with **school staff, governors** and collated surveys from **parents, staff and governors**.

Ebchester CE Primary School

Pupils at **Ebchester CE Primary School** spoke positively about a range of aspects of their school - their teachers, the curriculum and the inclusive approach the school takes towards its local community.

"You make friends here and all of the teachers are so kind."

"We believe in God and our values are courage, wisdom, respect and this term is compassion."

"You learn a lot in all of your lessons."

"I love PE and playing football."

"I love Elvis the tortoise."

How to read the findings

We have highlighted things that the school is doing well and should be continued as well as areas to explore. All of the points raised in the action plan are practical steps that the school can take to reduce the unintentional stigma and discrimination that pupils and families from poorer backgrounds may inadvertently face.

Some of the actions can be taken with immediate effect with little or no impact on time and resources. Some will require further investigation and thought about the best way to implement them.

We have indicated throughout the report what level of priority each area is as a way to help schools decide where to start when prioritising actions.

The levels are based on: number of 'areas to explore' for each topic, the importance of each action within the topic, the number of pupils/ families affected and the urgency in which actions need to be addressed. The ranking system is a guide – it offers an indication as to where it may be best for the school to start when prioritising their actions. It is not a grading system.

The table below shows the vocabulary that we use in this report to indicate the percentage of students to whom we spoke who shared the same views and opinions. While this table is intended to approximate the scale of each issue, the views of every single student are important.

Words	Frequency
Most, the majority, a significant number, in the main, all, frequently, often, a large number	75-100%
Many, a number, a lot of, numerous, quite a few, generally, regularly	50-75%
Some, several, sometimes	25-50%
A few, occasionally, a small number, on occasion	0-25%

High Priority

Medium Priority

Low priority

What are the key issues pupils face?

Additional Opportunities

In this theme

We explored the curriculum beyond the academic, vocational and technical and discussed with pupils the artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities available at their school. We sought to understand how the school ensures that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils to take part in a wide, rich set of experiences which provides them with the cultural capital they need to succeed in life. We sought to understand if all pupils benefit from these experiences and if there are any barriers for disadvantaged pupils.
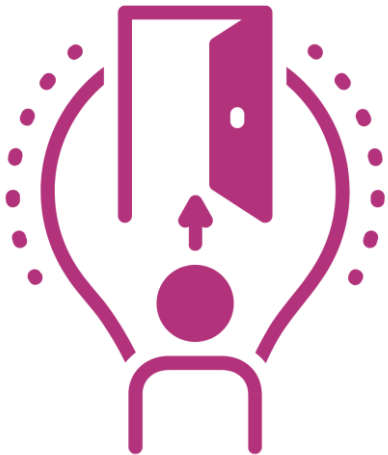
What is working well?

Pupils at **Ebchester CE Primary School** explained a range of trips that are offered to them, "We went to the Shipley Art Gallery, we did stitching using felt."

"The whole school went to the Gala Theatre to watch the pantomime."

"It's fun to go on trips, it gives us a range of experiences and a wider imagination."

Experiences to enhance cultural capital are supported by school, "All of our after school clubs are free of charge. Residential trips for Y5/6 pupils are well subsidised/ families with 2 pupils in the class get an additional 50% off/ pupils can attend free of charge if cost is an issue for parents. We aim to offer up to 6 trips/ visits per year - school pay for 3 of these. Voluntary contributions are asked for, but lack of payment does not prevent pupils joining these visits." (staff)

A high number of pupils explained that they can attend various clubs that are free of charge, "There's sports clubs, fun club and arts and craft clubs, they change every term and we get a letter to sign up."
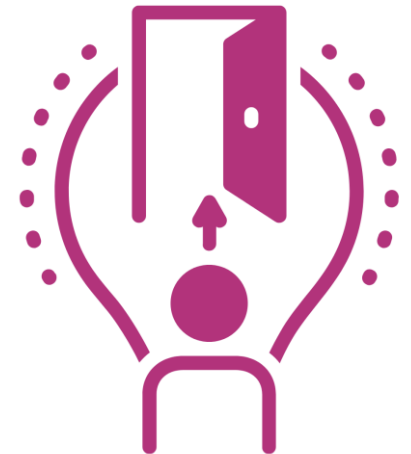
Additional Opportunities

What is working well?

Generally, pupils spoke positively of the range of activities they will take part in at Robinwood on the residential this year, "We do lots of different activities which are fun, it's like out of bounds." Some pupils also explained that they can pay for the residential in instalments, "My mam pays £15 a week. " This is positive practice, as it can fit in with families' pay days. This residential is subsidised by £110 for all pupils.

Some pupils explained how they experienced opportunities where visitors talked with them in school, "We had a Horrible History person on zoom." Other pupils reported that some visitors talked to them about aspirations, "When Richard Holden came in, he talked with us, the session wasn't all about what we want to do when we're older but he did ask us about it."

Many pupils spoke with excitement about what they wanted to do when they are older. Some pupils said that when they were in reception they had to draw what they wanted to be, and in year 3 or 4 they used the iPads to learn about different jobs. "I want to be a zoo keeper or YouTuber." "I want to be a game developer." "I want to be a chef because I really like cooking." Some pupils said that when they have told their teacher what they want to be, they are encouraged to work towards their goals.

Additional Opportunities

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
School photographs: Pupils can identify who has and has not purchased photographs because of the way that they are handed out. *Although this did not appear to be an issues with the groups consulted, consider as a future consideration,* "We give them out at the end of the day, most people buy them."	Consider photographs being collected in a central location. This may be a further conversation with photograph provider.
Branded kit allowed at football tournaments: At after-school clubs, pupils are allowed to wear their own sports clothing, "We're allowed to wear our own strips for matches." [second child] "I don't have one of them, they're like £40 but I do love football." "I don't have a kit, they are too expensive. I feel quite sad about it."	Could pupils wear their P.E. kit at all sporting events so that there is not pressure to have branded clothing? *During feedback, it was clarified that this was a one off when sessions were held by an external coach and that in all other sessions P.E Kit is worn.*
Kit required: Families are required to provide certain kit for their child to attend the residential school trip. Some families may have to purchase this especially, "We get a kit list about three weeks before, we'll get in on Monday in the meeting." It is good practice that a separate list is given, however for some families they may require much more notice.	Ensure a kit list is sent out along with trip letters, well in advance, so families have time to prepare and budget. *During feedback, it was discussed how the information is sent out at the beginning of the year, a discussion around bringing the meeting forward and reminding families there may be additional costs.*

Bullying

In this theme

We explored pupil's understanding of bullying as well as whether or not bullying as a result of poverty takes place within the school. We also discussed from a pupil perspective how quickly, consistently and effectively the school addresses bullying if it does occur.

What is working well?

All the pupils that we spoke to had a good understanding of what bullying is. "It is when it happens more than once – that's bullying, we learn about it." Also, many pupils were confident that if bullying happened at Ebchester Primary School, then it would be sorted out, "You would go on red if you hurt someone on purpose."

During discussions with pupils, some stated, "You can't really notice it [poverty], because we are all the same and have our uniform."

Celebrations

In this theme

We explored how occasions such as holidays, the end of the school year and Christmas are celebrated in school. We also looked at how key events within the school calendar are marked, exploring whether there are any barriers for poorer pupils.

What is working well?

Many pupils were vocal about different celebrations within school that are inclusive and free to participate in, in particular pupils enjoy the Christmas celebrations, "We all decorate the tree at Christmas with paper baubles." "We see Santa as well and he gives us chocolates and presents."

Frequently, pupils mentioned the Christmas party which takes place during the school day, "We have a party, we get hot dogs, there is a veggie option too." "We also have a Christmas dinner on that day too."

During consultation with other pupils, some explained that for World Book Day (WBD) every child receives a book from the PTA, "We all get a book, they're good ones too, mine had lots of pages." They also stated, "We don't dress up for WBD, we do fun reading activities instead."

Many pupils enjoy the Halloween discos, "We get hot dogs, everyone is accepted, we do games girls v boys and have candy apples." The pupils said there wasn't a charge to attend the disco, "We don't need to pay, we just need to fill in a slip to say if we want a vegetarian hotdog."

Pupils in Year 6 all wore a leavers hoodie, they explained, "School order them for everyone, think they pay most of it and we pay like £6 or something." Although this is a cost, school stated, "We don't make them pay if they can't, they would just get the hoodie if they didn't pay."

Celebrations

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Post-holiday questions: Pupils explained that when they return to school after the holidays, staff often ask them to share with the class where they have been and what they have done, "The teacher asks you after a holiday and on your birthday, where did you go or what did you get?" This highlights financial differences between families.	As a staff team compose a set of questions which can be used as part of whole class discussions but which do not highlight financial inequalities between children and families. Instead of asking 'What did you do during the holidays?' teachers could ask 'Who did you spend time with?' or 'What are you looking forward to most this school year?' Staff should also consider the approach they use when asking questions about home. Could these discussions take place on a one-to-one basis between pupils and staff rather than with the whole class?
Writing about holidays/weekends: Pupils have been asked to write about what they have done during the weekend/school holidays. Although not widespread, one group of pupils said, "Yeah at the start of the year."	Encourage staff to think of alternative creative writing tasks which are not focused on activities and experiences that pupils have taken part in outside of school.
Birthday celebrations: When it is a pupils birthday, children often bring in cakes and sweets to share with the class - this is not done by all families, "When it's someone's birthday we mostly bring cakes in and sweets."	Discourage pupils from bringing in birthday cakes and sweets by deciding upon a consistent whole school approach to the celebration of birthdays. A number of schools have introduced a birthday hat, a birthday badge or allowed children to go in for their lunch first on the week of their birthday. Some schools have curtailed the bringing in of sweets and cakes by explaining to parents that they are not permitted as they contradict healthy eating policies and may pose problems for pupils with allergies.
Party invitations: Pupils are currently allowed to hand out party invitations to their peers in school, "We usually hand them out at home time or in the morning."	Agree a consistent approach to distributing party invitations in school that do not involve children handing out the invitations in front of the whole class.

Celebrations

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Gift giving culture: Some pupils bring in gifts for staff at the end of the year and at Christmas. Some children feel under pressure to bring in gifts for their teachers. "Yeah we do at the end of the year, it's my teachers birthday in a few days so I might then." "Sometimes they open them in the classroom."	Consider other ways that children can show their appreciation to their teacher rather than bringing in gifts. Families could be asked to make a donation to the foodbank rather than bring in a gift for their teacher with donations collected in a central area in school so that pupils cannot identify who brings in donations. Alternatively, all pupils could be provided with time and resources to make their teacher a card or write a letter of appreciation.
Easter: At Easter time, several pupils reported an egg rolling competition in the hall which they said they enjoy, "We do egg rolling in the hall and decorate eggs." However, some pupils did say that they had to bring in their own eggs to decorate.	Try to avoid using food and or asking pupils to bring food in from home for craft activities. Could you use polystyrene eggs instead? Or give each child an egg shape outline on paper for them to decorate. *During feedback, the Head Teacher explained how school will look to provide all pupils with an egg for this celebration.*
Halloween Disco: Some pupils said that they dressed up in costumes for the disco, "You don't have to if you don't want to." Be aware that some children may not have a costume to wear and this can put unnecessary pressure on families to buy something.	Consider having a spare range of costumes for pupils to borrow. You could ask families to donate any unwanted costumes after their children have grown out of them.

Charity, Fundraising and Community

In this theme

We explored how the school provides opportunities for pupils to engage with society and make a positive contribution to their wider community. We also looked specifically at fundraising activities and if there are any barriers for pupils engaging in these opportunities.

What is working well?

Pupils at **Ebchester CE Primary School** appear to have a good presence within their community, "We take food to the church and we went to visit old people too." There did not seem to be any stigma about how the food is initially collected, "We all just help to carry it to the church for the foodbank."

Charity, Fundraising and Community

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Selling items for charity: The school sells items on behalf of charities, such as poppies for Remembrance Day and red noses for Comic Relief. Not all pupils are able to participate in these activities, "If you have money you can get a slap band and other stuff." It is positive that all children get a poppy.	When fundraising for charities could the focus be around raising awareness of charities and the issues that they tackle rather than raising money? The focus could be on campaigning rather than raising funds and then families and pupils could be directed to the relevant charities donation page if they wished, but this would prevent money from being collected in school. When fundraising, consider how all pupils can be involved in the activities that are organised regardless of whether or not they have brought in money from home. For example, when organising a cake sale, donations could be collected and then all pupils provided with a cake regardless of whether or not they have brought in money.
Jam Jar: Pupils run enterprise style projects, making money through selling items. Many pupils explained that they bring in a jar filled with items from home to sell at the fair, "We all need to bring in a jar filled with stuff, it can be whatever you want." "Yeah well I don't generally have jars so I don't ever bring one in." This task can place pressure on some families.	Could pupils sell their enterprise products within the local community rather than directly to other pupils? A number of shops are happy to accommodate pupil stalls. This would ease pressure on pupils to purchase items and services from their peers. Making the jars at home can be expensive. Could this activity be done in school, rather than something done at home, to make sure all pupils have the same resources.
School fair: Fairs are a popular event at Ebchester and whilst it is free to enter the fair, some pupils stated, "If you don't have money you go, but just can't buy anything." *During feedback, it was clarified that there are free activities that pupils can take part in if they do not have any money on them.* "We have a pot of money where children get it if they don't have their own, there's some free activities too, however they may not have the same money as friends so we can think about that."	Consider having as many free activities as there are paid activities at the Christmas and Summer fair, so everyone who attends can feel the same sense of belonging. Some schools have also given children two tokens each, so that they get a go on two of the stalls for free and then families pay for additional items and games. Consider alternative fundraising ideas. Some schools encourage staff and parents to sign up to 'EasyFunding' as a way of putting money back into the school: Fundraising	Charity Fundraising Online	Easyfundraising

Curriculum and Ability Groups

In this theme

We sought to explore the school's curriculum intent with a focus on how the school ensures that disadvantaged pupils have access to a broad curriculum. This included looking at how ability setting is used within the school.

What is working well?

The majority of pupils told us, "We just have tables in our class that we sit at, in Year 3 you do different work, but that's just because they're a year younger." There does not appear to be any stigma attached to this.

A number of pupils enjoy their swimming lessons, "I love swimming, we go to Consett."

During the audit, we saw pupils in Year 1 attending their music session and some older pupils explained that they do music for one term and then swap over so everyone gets a chance, "We all play the recorder and xylophone, we swap over so it will be someone else's turn now."

All pupils in the juniors play the recorder as part of the curriculum.

Curriculum and Ability Groups

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Music tuition: Music tuition can be too costly. Some parents commented on this, "Last term I was struggling with paying for music lessons and instrument hire. I managed to access a grant from DCC to pay last term." This is means tested through the council and school signpost parents to this.	Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Music for Schools – Music for Schools Foundation (mfsf.org.uk)
Swimming kit: Pupils miss out on swimming lessons if they do not bring their swimming kit, "If you do not bring in your kit, they ring home and if not brought in then you stay at school."	Consider having spare swimming kits for pupils to use. School have in the past tried to implement spare kit. School to monitor which children miss swimming lessons.

Food

In this theme

We explored how pupils access food over the course of the school day including breakfast, break time, lunchtime and out of school visits. We examined how discretely Free School Meals are administered, how debt is tackled as well as the quality of the lunchtime experience for pupils.

What is working well?

On the whole, pupils who have school meals really enjoy the food, in both quality and quantity, "The food is delicious." "Yeah, I think there is enough food given."

It is positive that pupils in Key Stage One can sit next to school meals if others opt to have packed lunch. Several pupils explained that they can swap daily and choose whether to have packed lunch or school dinner, "I had turkey dinner today, but I will have packed lunch tomorrow."

Pupils appear to enjoy the lunchtime experience, there was a lovely atmosphere during the audit and there is good support over this period too, "We have lunch buddies to help the younger ones."

At Ebchester, pupils have a good relationship with the catering staff and the catering manager often makes extra portions for pupils, "I always make a few extra in case someone forgets their packed lunch and I make the portions a good size as it might be the only meal some kids get."

Many pupils reported how they received a good breakfast before their SATs, "We got sausage and bacon sandwiches, tea and juice, everyone came in and got them." This is fantastic practice.

Food

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Milk: Pupils have to pay for cartons of milk. Some pupils do not have milk, "My parents are being cautious with money, so I don't get milk because I'd have to pay for it."	Consider how milk is distributed. Some schools have provided jugs of milk at lunchtime so that all pupils who would like to have milk are able to access it and that there is not a cost attached to it for any families.
Breakfast provision: There is a paid breakfast club, "It is a couple of pounds for breakfast club." Pupils felt that staff would be able to give them a snack if they did not have breakfast at home or attend breakfast club, however some pupils said they would feel a bit embarrassed telling a teacher they hadn't eaten, " I would just feel silly saying it in front of everyone."	Explore ways to develop breakfast provision - Kellogg's, Greggs and Magic Breakfast may be able to support with this. Magic Breakfast Breakfast Clubs | Greggs Foundation
Cost: Pupils and/or parents believe school lunches are expensive. "Next year when school dinners are no longer funded I feel we will struggle. Costs will be around £35-£40 per week which is a lot alongside bus fares etc." (Parent)	Could you discuss these concerns with the catering providers to see if there is any way of reducing the price of school lunches without reducing the quality or quantity?
Break time snack provision: Key Stage 2 do not have a snack due to the government free fruit scheme being only for Key Stage 1, "When we were younger we got snacks but now we don't."	Explore ways of regularly providing Key Stage Two children with a snack at break time free of charge. Some schools have given each year group one piece of fruit per day, e.g. Year Six on Monday, Year Five on Tuesday. Approach local business in order to ask if they can support the provision of fruit for pupils in Key Stage Two.

Food

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Communication of lunch money debt: Letters regarding dinner money debt do not signpost families to places where they can get support. A small number of the parent body stated, **"Communication isn't great, and if payment accounts are in debt you receive messages quite quickly to pay them. In my mind this indicates little knowledge or support for people who may be struggling."** (Parent)	Ensure that letters and text messages sent to families about dinner money offer support and encourage families to discuss any financial issues that they may be facing with the school.

Homework

In this theme

We explored how homework is administered, what resources and materials pupils need at home to complete homework, and the various ways in which the school supports pupils.

What is working well?

Pupils explained that they are set homework tasks, "We have a spelling book and a purple book where we stick the worksheet in, we do that at school." It is positive that these materials are given to pupils for homework tasks.

Homework

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Online access: Some pupils have difficulty accessing internet/devices at home. When asked in the survey 'what one thing would you change for those living in poverty?', governors shared, "Small changes like providing homework club for those who don't have access to computers at home."	Complete an audit of the technology available to each family and the access they have to internet/WiFi. Offer a space in school for children to access technology and internet to complete their homework at break times or lunch. Alternatively, remove homework that requires online resources or access to technology and the internet.
Additional resources: Pupils have been asked to complete other tasks at home as part of their homework, this has required additional resources, "I like the fun homework, like the colouring ones." [Do you get the stuff to do that from school] "No and my pencils are faded but miss would give you some."	Encourage teachers to consider the resources that will be required when completing homework tasks and consider ways to support families in accessing the required resources. Some schools have had a central store of resources that pupils can help themselves to - could this be facilitated in Ebchester CE Primary? When setting model making or creative homework, staff should ensure that the same resources are provided to all pupils.
Rewards for reading: Pupils are rewarded for reading at home, "We get diddy dots for reading and if our book is signed, then whoever gets the most gets a prize - you get a dip in the box." However, it is great that children are given the same diddy dots even if they read themselves, as this does not require a parent to sign their reading record. There was a perception whereby pupils felt the same people received prizes, "It is usually the same people who get the prizes."	Explore the impact of rewards, which show which pupils have and haven't read, on those families where it may be more difficult for reading to take place on a regular basis. Explore alternative reading rewards which do not draw attention to and exclude those pupils who may find it more difficult to read at home.

Leadership and Governance

In this theme

We explored with leaders, staff and governors their awareness and understanding of issues relating to poverty; including their accountability in relation to Pupil Premium and what actions they have taken to address social disadvantage within their local context. This included an exploration of the school's curriculum intent.

What is working well?

Leaders and staff who filled in the survey have an understanding of poverty within their local context, "Children not having the experiences that other children have outside of school e.g. places visited and activities taken part in. This means they may have less knowledge or understanding about certain things." "It is about the range of needs, where families have never struggled, they are now." (Head Teacher)

Governors who filled out the survey also have an understanding as to how the school support all pupils, "Equal opportunities for all so no child is left out." (Governor)

Leaders and staff aim to address social disadvantage in school, "We have a Pupil Premium lead who makes these decisions alongside the Head Teacher and governing body."

Staff have a good understanding on what Pupil Premium is spent on, "Money is currently spent on offering a range of experiences to all children, subsidising trips including overnight stays at Robin Wood, catch-up intervention sessions for Pupil Premium children and also ensuring that there are free after school clubs for all children to attend each week."

Leadership and Governance

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Living wage: The school is not currently a member of the Living Wage Foundation.	Consider becoming an accredited member of the Living Wage Foundation. Further information can be found at: www.livingwage.org.uk.
Staff training: Staff have not had training on the impact of poverty and the attainment gap.	Consider scheduling Poverty Proofing© training for staff to address some of the issues identified in this report and ensure that poverty-proofing becomes an integral part of the whole school ethos.

Pupil Support

In this theme

We looked at what pastoral support is available for pupils, how pupils access support, and what impact it has. We explored how the school supports the development of pupils' confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy.

What is working well?

Many pupils stated, "Before tests our teachers say don't worry it doesn't matter if you get it wrong, just try." It is great that on the whole pupils felt well supported.

There are displays within classrooms that show 'zones of regulation.' This is a great whole school approach, pupils in Reception demonstrated how they use these, "Look we have zones of regulation, we're here on this side, they are the faces that we feel." This strategy was also echoed by some older pupils, "We have zones of regulation which we used to use all of the time."

Most pupils consulted agreed they would feel comfortable speaking to their teacher by a show of hands and stated, "My teacher would ask what was wrong."

Pupil Support

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Speaking about feelings with staff: A small number of pupils said they would not feel comfortable speaking to a member of staff about how they feel. **"We used to have a worry jar that was good,"** pupils said they would like to have this again.	- Consider other ways that children are able to speak about their feelings whilst in school. Some schools have trained 'Pupil Ambassadors.' - Children North East run a wellbeing course for schools called BU. It is an early intervention that supports children and young people to build resilience and develop the foundations for positive mental health and emotional wellbeing. - Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families - Free community education workshops for young people (redcross.org.uk) - For pupils who benefit from spending time with the animals, 'Huggle Pets in the Community' offer funded group interventions for pupils with SEMH concerns. https://www.hugglepetsinthecommunity.co.uk/social-emotional-health-wellbeing-sessions-in-schools (MIDLANDS BASED- BUT MAY HAVE SOMETHING SIMILAR IN OTHER AREAS) - Specifically for girls: Home - Rising Girl

Pupil Voice

In this theme

We explored what meaningful opportunities the school provides for all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to debate and discuss issues, to share their views beliefs and opinions, and to be actively involved in school life.

What is working well?

Many pupils mentioned a range of opportunities within this theme, "We have School Council where all names get drawn out of a hat, it is random and you can go for it if you want to." "We have a display where it says 2023-23 School Council." It is positive that other pupils are aware of what the School Council do within their role, "They go into the staff room to say what we want to do they choose equipment." Some pupils explained that they do get to know what is mentioned at the meetings and said, "We have time to talk about it with them, we just go up and talk to them." A few also mentioned how other views are taken into account, "I have a book where I can write down – other people tell ideas and I write them down."

Other opportunities range from Computing Council, Team Captains and Tortoise Monitor. "They are chose the same way as school council."

Pupil Voice

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Monitoring uptake of roles: The school does not currently monitor which pupils take on additional roles and responsibilities. Pupils can be School Counsellor more than once."I have been picked to be on School Council twice now."	Monitor the number of Pupil Premium pupils who have additional responsibilities in school, as part of a wider audit and in the take up of extra-curricular opportunities.

Resources

In this theme

We explored whether pupils need additional resources to fully take part in the school day, and how the school supports pupils who cannot afford the resources required to engage with all lessons.

What is working well?

The school ground are a wonderful resource in which all pupils access daily. Many pupils enjoy their outdoor play due to the free flow access that was seen during audit.

A number of pupils commented on accessing Forest School, "We go up to Forest School it is good, we wear waterproofs." It is brilliant that there are enough waterproofs and spare wellies for every child and, when asked, some pupils reported, "Yeah there is enough for everyone."

Many pupils explained how they made pencil cases within their lessons to use for school, "We made our own in DT we use them too."

During consultation with a number of pupils, it is positive Poverty Proofing © practice that trading cards are not allowed in school, as these items can highlight differences, "We're not allowed Pokemon cards or anything, they are banned."

If a child does not have their own water bottle, they can use cups that are available in the classrooms.

When asked, the majority of pupils felt that they had what they needed to learn at school.

Resources

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Water bottles: Pupils bring in their own water bottles from home, with 'Smiggle' being the most popular brand. "People bring Prime and Smiggle water bottles." Pupils at Ebchester Primary School did not appear to hold any stigma about these, however this is something to be aware of as the prices of these items and peer pressure can create financial pressure.	Some schools provide water bottles for all pupils and do not allow them to be taken home. Consider if this is something that could be introduced at **Ebchester C of E Primary School.** If school water bottles were provided, it would also curtail some of the current discussions which are taking place amongst pupils in relation to the branding of water bottles.
Show and tell: Some classes have 'show and tell.' Quite a few pupils in Early Years showed what they had brought in from home that day to show and tell, ranging from big teddies to poppets. This can highlight inequalities.	Consider if alternative questions could be asked during show and tell time which do not possibly highlight inequalities, and which discourage pupils from bringing in toys, for example: 'tell us one thing that made you happy this week' or 'show a piece of work you've been proud of this week'.

Rewards, Behaviour and Attendance

In this theme

We explored whether children from poorer backgrounds are rewarded or punished differently from other children. We looked at the consistency of the delivery of the rewards and sanctions system and how this impacts on pupils' experiences of the school day. We investigated what intelligent, fair and effective action the school takes to support pupils who are struggling with their attendance and behaviour.

What is working well?

At Ebchester Primary School, may pupils talked positively about receiving Star Of The Week certificates in assembly and also Head Teacher awards, "Two people every week get the Head Teacher Award and Star Of The Week, they also get stickers."

There are some positives to the reward system, which is a traffic light system, "Everyone starts on green, they are in every classroom." Pupils are clear on the expectations. A number of pupils also told us about team points, "We get team points and it is blue, yellow red and green." On the whole, this is seen as a positive to collect team points, whilst out at lunch one pupil stated, "I just got team points – Yes!"

Attendance is closely monitored, yet not celebrated as a whole class nor a competition. This is brilliant practice, as this can highlight those who struggle with attendance. Instead, staff aim to build positive relationships with families to support those struggling to attend.

Rewards, Behaviour and Attendance

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Public displays of behaviour: Public displays of rewards/behaviour management. Some pupils felt that there is embarrassment when they are placed on amber or red in front of others, "Sometimes people say they're not going to play with you when you get on amber, I don't want to let anyone down." "I try my best not to cry, it's sad because everyone sees."	Consider other ways to use the traffic light system that consults with pupils on a 1-1 basis. Could teachers just record who has moved up or down privately.
Monitoring: There was a small number of pupils who felt the same people are always on red traffic light, "Sometimes it is the same people."	Continue to work with families and pupils and monitor this.

Support to Families and Parents

In this theme

We discussed how school-related costs affect families. We sought to understand from a parent's perspective the ways in which the school already effectively supports families as well as exploring areas where this support could be improved.
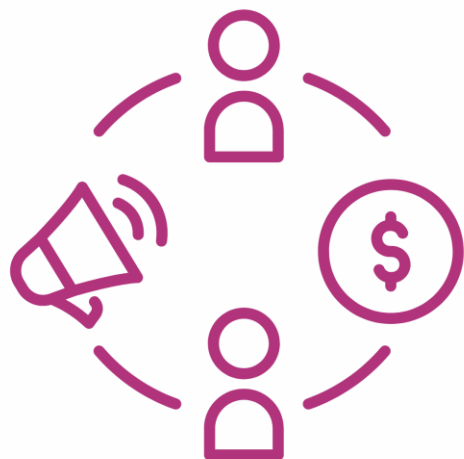
What is working well?

Staff aim to build positive and meaningful relationships with families, "It is those informal chats, standing at the gate on the morning, checking in with them." This approach works well and has success, "For example, we have a parent coming in tonight to just chat about attendance."

88% of families who filled in the surveys think the school gives enough notice when they ask for money, "We are always notified about events in the newsletters in good time." "I don't ever remember the school asking for money at short notice."

76% of families said they know who they could contact at school if they were having difficulties affording items or activities that the school has asked payment for.

Some families reported on the school and staff providing care, "The school is a lovely place for my child to attend. They love going and all the staff are very welcoming and caring." Other parents commented on activities being accessible, "I think the school does a good job of making activities accessible. They stress donations to the school fund are voluntary and seek funding to subsidise trips where possible."

Support to Families and Parents

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Unaware of support available: For a few parents, they are unaware of the support provided by the school if they are struggling financially. ”Don't know, as I don't know what provision is already in place. Maybe making this information more public would be something they could do.” **76%** of those who filled in the surveys felt they did not know if there was any support available at school to help pay for any items, events or activities (e.g. uniform, school lunches, trips and fun events, materials for learning).	Make parents aware that financial support is available when discussing trips and extra-curricular opportunities. Include a paragraph at the end of letters sent home that states that: 'No child from this school will miss out on any key educational trips and opportunities because of money. If you are unable to pay for this trip please contact [named person] and our school will make sure that your child is able to attend'. Work to advertise help and offers from the Local Authority through all platforms.

Uniform

In this theme

We sought to understand the way in which school uniform and PE kits is supplied, how much it costs, and the expectations that the school has in regards to uniform and PE kits. We also investigated how the school supports families with uniform costs.

What is working well?

Pupils can wear a range of affordable uniform, some pupils wear non logo and others choose the logo, "I just wear my red one like this, it's okay." A number of pupils stated that they are not disciplined for infractions, " The teacher might ask why, but I've got trainers on because my shoes do not fit anymore."

For PE, pupils wear their team coloured top, of which there is a great store of spare uniform and it is great that siblings have the same coloured top, this will support pupils to wear their siblings when no longer needed. "We wear whichever coloured top team we're in. [What about if you have siblings?] Yeah, they have the same colour." Pupils can also wear plain tops without the logo.

There has been some work to develop a pre-loved uniform and quite a few pupils explained how this works, "At the summer fair there's a big rail with jumpers on, people can buy them for cheap."

Uniform

What we heard or noticed	Practical ideas and solutions
Cost: Some families think that the school uniform is expensive.	In order to support families with the costs of the compulsory uniform, explore options for collecting and distributing second hand uniform. Could families purchase a sew-on or iron on logo to be added to unbranded blazers? Uniforms_Cost_Guide_For_Schools_Aug22.pdf (children-ne.org.uk)
Instalments: Families are unable to pay for the uniform in instalments.	Discuss with the uniform provider the possibility of families paying for uniform via instalments.
Pre-loved uniform: It is positive that there is a provision to support families with a pre-loved uniform, however not all can access this and not all parents are aware of it, "One thing would be to offer a uniform sharing service, so that clothing kids have grown out of can be reused." (Parent)	Ask pupils to donate good quality second hand uniform at the end of the year. Explore if there is a place within the community where the school can collect a stock of spare uniform for parents to help themselves to. Alternatively, spare uniform could be made available at parent's events, sometimes allowing parents to make a small donation for the uniform lessens the stigma associated with it. Support around how to implement effective pre-loved uniform provision can be found here: Developing pre-loved uniform provision. Consider making a key staff member responsible for setting up/having training on how to set up a pre-loved uniform shop: Second Hand Uniform Marketplace | Uniformd. Some schools ask their eco warriors to help promote pre-loved through recycling.
Poverty: Pupils think they can identify who lives in poverty based on their uniform. Just one comment, "Their bags might be falling apart and they may have poor behaviour."	Discuss during PSHE.

Additional information

Parent Survey Overview

As part of our work we sent out a survey regarding school costs to parents and carers. We received 25 responses, and this slide presents an overview of the feedback.

"School are very mindful of not putting any unnecessary financial pressure onto parents, for example not charging for clubs after school, which makes them accessible for all regardless of income. Also, not making children wear fancy dress costumes for certain events throughout the year."

"I have never been offered financial support for trips, clubs, lunches, etc. Not a negative comment, just personally as a single parent I've never been offered any."

"As a single parent I would find it extremely difficult to discuss personal financial issues with the school."

"Other than the council providing vouchers for school holidays, I have no idea what, if any, support is offered. I pay for trips, send in donations etc. like everyone else."

Parent Survey Overview (continued)

16%
of families who filled in the online survey had children entitled to Free School Meals

48%
of families would feel 'quite or very uncomfortable' approaching the school for financial help

24%
of families are unaware of who to contact in school for help with paying for things

32%
of families stated that they have struggled with school-related costs

88%
of families think the school give enough notice for payments

76%
of families 'don't know' if there is financial support available from school

92%
'don't know' if school signposts to additional support, outside of school

60%
of families felt that the school has a 'good or better' understanding of financial issues families face

72%
of families stated that the school 'usually or always' provides good support for those with financial difficulties

84%
of families feel that the school is 'always' a welcoming place, regardless of financial background

Appendix 1

This is an overview of your school. Each individual school also works within its own local and regional context, and typically has additional factors to consider such as ethnicity, rurality, and school composition. It is important to stress that all of the actions identified in this report are important and should be carefully considered by the school. Those that have been labelled 'low priority' are important recommendations which should not be disregarded.

Area	Priority		Area	Priority
Additional Opportunities	Yellow		Leadership and Governance	Yellow
Bullying	Yellow		Pupil Support	Yellow
Celebrations	Red		Pupil Voice	Yellow
Charity, Fundraising and Community	Orange		Resources	Orange
Curriculum and Ability Groups	Yellow		Rewards, Behaviour and Attendance	Yellow
Food	Orange		Support to Parents and Families	Yellow
Homework	Orange		Uniform	Orange

Appendix 2

What is poverty?

Government statistics from March 2021 show that there are approximately 3.9 million children living in poverty in the UK today. This is around 27% of all children in the United Kingdom. In the North East of England this number is even higher, with 38% of all children in the region living in poverty, the highest rate of child poverty in the UK. This is not set to improve, as forecasts suggest that by 2026/7, 33% of children in the UK will be living in poverty, rates not seen since the 1990s . In schools, poverty is often equated with FSM but we know many children in poverty are not eligible for FSM. We use a broader definition of poverty that seeks to understand the ways in which poverty is experienced in school and how it restricts children and young people's opportunities to flourish.

A more useful definition of poverty, and one that Poverty Proofing© has adopted, is therefore:

"Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities, and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary patterns, customs and activities."

Peter Townsend

The full appendix can be found on our website. This appendix is meant to be read in conjunction with the UK Cost of the School Day report and action plan. In it, we cover the following topics:

- What is poverty?

- How does poverty affect different socio-demographic groups?

- Poverty and education

- Poverty Proofing© and Ofsted

- The consequences of poverty on health, housing, education and employment

We also provide a list of references you can consult for further reading about any of these topics.

About Us

Children North East

Children North East want all babies, children and young people to be happy and healthy, and to grow up feeling safe and loved, resilient to the challenges they may face, and valued and confident.

We have a strong children's rights ethos and believe that real, lasting social change is achieved when those who are experiencing or have experienced issues lead that change. We work both directly with babies, children and young people, and in their families, schools and communities, delivering services, support and interventions that provide a platform to work through issues, take action and provide tools for individuals and communities to reach their full potential.

Poverty Proofing the School Day

Poverty Proofing© the School Day is a project developed by Children North East. The project provides a toolkit 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 school funding provided for those eligible for Free School Meals. Poverty Proofing© the School Day consists of an audit for each individual school, questioning pupils, staff, parents and governors.

The result is an action plan tailored to each individual school to address any stigmatising policies or practices. There is then the opportunity to be awarded an accreditation following are view visit. We also offer training to staff and governors on poverty and its impact on education.

Thank you Ebchester CE Primary School and their pupils for participating in Poverty Proofing the School Day

Children North East — Poverty Proofing©