

United Against Bullying School Case Study: Making sure disadvantaged children have equal opportunities

How Ad Astra Infant School took action to ensure the curriculum provides all children with equal opportunities, regardless of their background

Context of our anti-bullying work

In our local area we have a high level of poverty and social care involvement. A lot of these families have children who attend one of our Trust schools. Due to this it has become apparent that some of our children start school with a range of gaps in their skills, knowledge and life experiences. This is not only impactful on their learning but also their understanding of the world around them.

What we hoped to achieve

Our ultimate aim is to improve all our children's life chances and prepare them to thrive in their future lives. We want to give our disadvantaged children the same experiences and opportunities that other children have been able to access due to their circumstances. In turn this will not only improve life chances and vocabulary but secure the key learning and skills they will need to become lifelong learners and gain employment.

The action we took

- We have a well-planned out and progressive curriculum - it has been created with the needs of our children at its heart. Exposing children to different artists, different cultures, books, musicians, trips, visitors etc.
- Each year group have planned well thought out sparkly starters, fab finishes, and extra-curricular activities to ensure all children receive a range of experiences. These include a range of trips and visitors; Crazy Creatures, Space Dome, Looking after Ducks, Farm Visit, Food tasting from around the world, Storytellers, Coffee mornings, Upton Country park, Poole Quay, Moors Valley, Library etc.
- Made links with care home. We invite them to events and visit them to read/play games.
- Disadvantaged children get priority to attend Forest School, Extra Sports clubs during the school day, opportunities to learn an instrument for free and trips and visitors subsidised.
- Disadvantaged children get priority at school-based clubs – lunchtime and afterschool.
- Aspirations day – different professions to showcase the different jobs that the children can do

- We invite parents into different events to learn alongside the children and put on workshops to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Investment into a range of literature to expose children to different cultures, families, influential people.

Impact and outcomes of the work

- Vocabulary has improved
- More engagement with learning and understanding with topics
- PP data has improved – SATS/ELG
- PP children are having the same life experience as other children
- Closing of the gap between Disadvantaged children and non-Disadvantaged children
- Attendance is on a whole good
- Children have high expectations and aspirations for themselves

What we have learned

We cannot assume that all children start school/go through school experiencing the same life encounters. It is important to know where our children have come from and their backgrounds. It is our job to give the children the most broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the best life chances.