

## Written evidence submitted by Ambition Institute

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds leave school on average 18 months behind their non-disadvantaged peers. The impact of school closures will only make this worse. We need great teachers now more than ever.

### **The importance of teachers**

In its Guide to Pupil Premium, the Education Endowment Foundation is clear that good teaching is the most important lever schools have to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, emphasising that:

*'Ensuring an effective teacher is in front of every class, and that every teacher is supported to keep improving, is the key ingredient to a successful school and should rightly be the top priority for Pupil Premium spending'* (EEF, 2019).

This is part of a tiered approach recommended by the EEF, where teaching is prioritised, followed by targeted academic support and then wider strategies.

The evidence supports this: as a pupil in our system, if you get access to one of the best teachers in the system you will learn in six months what it takes an average teacher a whole year to teach. If you get one of the worst teachers, the same learning will take you over two years (Wiliam, 2013).

For poor pupils, the difference between a good teacher and a bad teacher is equivalent to a whole year's worth of learning (The Sutton Trust, 2011).

### **The importance of teacher development**

Targeted interventions at a pupil level are important. But if we are to help disadvantaged children to catch up with their peers when schools re-open, it is vital that schools continue to follow the tiered approach recommended by the EEF, and that they prioritise improving teaching in their catch-up strategies.

Evidence shows that high quality professional development for teachers has a significant effect on pupils' learning outcomes, and a greater effect on attainment than other interventions school may consider (EPI, 2020).

### **Recommendation**

In line with EEF guidance on the existing Pupil Premium, teacher development should be a priority for schools' strategies to help close the gap when schools re-open. Schools will need to select programmes that are informed by evidence and give them the best value for money, and this can be best achieved by offering a whole-school approach to improving teacher quality. This will support schools to achieve sustainable change, rather than delivering quick fixes, and will build expertise across their teams, so that all pupils benefit from improvements across subjects and phases.

Whilst schools remain closed, the gap will widen. To close that gap as quickly and effectively as possible when schools re-open, schools and the government need to invest in their teachers. This will help in the short-term, to reverse the educational impact of this pandemic, but also lays strong foundations for the future.

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