

Pupil Premium: How e-learning can bridge the attainment gap

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What is Pupil Premium?

Pupil Premium is awarded to schools with disadvantaged children - defined by the Department for Education as a pupil who has been eligible to receive free school meals (FSM) in the past six years, a pupil that has been 'Looked After' for six months in the past year or any pupil whose parents are Service personnel.

Disadvantaged children can have problems ranging from academic attainment to emotional distress or a lack of self-confidence - just because a pupil from a disadvantaged background is doing well in the classroom doesn't mean that they don't need help in other areas. Many schools are using a proportion of their Pupil Premium to improve pupils' access to learning through the use of technology.

How is technology being used?

We've taken a look at three schools who are using technology via Pupil Premium - and how you can use these innovative ideas to help disadvantaged pupils in your school.

John Davies

John Davies Primary and Nursery School in Sutton-in-Ashfield have invested in the provision of ICT equipment for their disadvantaged pupils.

Using technology in the classroom is becoming increasingly popular in classrooms around the world - and the benefits are numerous. For Pupil Premium children, introducing technology into the classroom can help them engage more with a subject.

Firstly, for those disadvantaged children, not having access to the same technology as their peers can make them feel left out. Where learning platforms are used in schools, those pupils that benefit the most are the children who access it from home to do homework, or share their achievements with their parents.

Providing ICT equipment to disadvantaged pupils, like iPads that they can take home, keeps them engaged with learning - and with tablet technology still a relatively new phenomenon, it makes learning more exciting, too. Gamification - using game-based elements in learning - makes things like tests or classroom projects more exciting for children.

Provost Williams & Kempston

Provost Williams Church of England Primary School in Ryton-on-Dunsmore and **Kempston Rural Lower School** in Bedford have invested in educational software for their disadvantaged pupils. They also ensure access to computers and other resources out of school time for those pupils.

Giving children the opportunity to access their learning from outside the classroom allows them to blend learning with playing - they can use a tablet computer for playing games, but you can also encourage the use of educational games.

A recent study by the University of Hull showed that those children who were able to take technology home as opposed to just using it within school were more likely to put more effort into their learning. In fact, they became much more willing to finish their work once they had got home.

Kevin, Burden, principal investigator, said: "Pupils were more engaged and were able - and willing - to finish off work at home, then email it back to their class teacher so there were no 'dog eating homework' excuses. We also saw parents and family members becoming much

more engaged in the pupil's education and learning in general, when pupils have a personal device like the iPad, something that could have implications for adult literacy as well."

The tablets gave teachers greater opportunity to think creatively about teaching - again, benefitting the learners.

St Anne's

St Anne's Catholic Primary School in Basingstoke provided laptops for their disadvantaged students, enabling access to the VLE and other resources outside of school hours.

Learning platforms are the perfect way for teachers to track, monitor and set work. They also allow pupils to message each other regarding work - and these messages can be monitored by the teacher.

Most learning platforms, as well as being accessible from anywhere with an internet connection - like at home - can also be accessed via smartphones and tablets as easily as traditional computers.

The fact that they can be accessed via a smartphone is of particular use to disadvantaged Pupil Premium learners. Many families that can't afford a computer can afford - and often already have - a smartphone. Encouraging kids to get on their parents' smartphones can have a huge positive impact on their self-confidence, too, since it is often the case that children know more about the latest technology than their parents - essentially, you are putting their lessons in a medium that they are familiar with.

Learning platforms allow teachers to set work - in the same way as they can do traditionally - depending on the learner's abilities and progress within class. However, what makes a learning platform more useful is that it allows pupils to ask the teacher a question via a messaging

system. This is a vital tool for providing a little extra support to those children who need it. The messaging system, through allowing them to interact with others in their class, creates greater interaction and inclusion.

Online Resources - A Lower Cost Way to Harness Technology

Aside from the ideas above, consider investing in online resources for your disadvantaged pupils - many of these can be used as part of an integrated system of teaching or interventions, particularly in Mathematics and English. Online resources can be used to complete projects and homework assignments, are affordable (if not free) and can inspire your pupils to make great strides in their education.

There are many online learning activities that use gamification (the inclusion of game-like elements in learning) - and these are perfect for engaging pupils more. Get your class creating their own animations with [these great applications](#), or working on their core skills with [Mathsanywhere](#) or [Spellanywhere](#), two e-learning programmes that make learning to spell or count more fun - and accessible from both home and school.

Why not encourage your kids to get creative with sites like [Pinterest](#), the online pinboard, or improve their confidence in writing by inviting them to blog about particular events, or about their family lives on a safe, easy-to-use eportfolio system.

All of these resources are available on or designed for mobile use.

For more advice on how to use your Pupil Premium funding effectively, visit [The Sutton Trust's EEF teaching and learning toolkit](#), which is designed to help you make the most of your additional funding.

If you want to find out more about how e-learning and mobile technology can help your students, take a look at these articles:

[How does technology improve learning?](#)

[Creative blogging: improve pupil interaction, English skills and more](#)

[Augmented reality in education](#)

[44 ways to better use smartphones in the classroom](#)

[5 simple ways to use a smartphone in the classroom](#)

[5 of the best educational apps for Smartphones and Tablets](#)

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