

Alt Academy THE HARMONY TRUST

Covid19 Recovery and Catch Up Premium Strategy Statement November 2020

Our aim is to ensure that our children experience the best educational provision beginning with excellence in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We believe that school should be a place where every child achieves and makes progress in their learning across the whole curriculum over time. We know that parents are the single most influential factor in children's outcomes and that we need to prioritise even further the need to work closely with parents so they can support their children's education. Every child has the entitlement to an inclusive curriculum, and we strive to ensure that disadvantage and additional needs do not act as barriers to learning and achievement. We aim for all our children to succeed both academically and socially, so they're sufficiently prepared for the next phase of their learning and beyond as responsible and respectful citizens. The Harmony Trust core values underpin everything we do.

Context

- Alt Academy serves a disadvantaged community in Oldham almost half of our pupils live in the top 10% most deprived areas and around 90% in the top 20% most deprived areas of the country . We know that those living in poverty have been worst hit by the virus and its wider impact.
- **Acute indicators of deprivation remain and have been heightened by the impact of the virus.** These include: adults without qualifications, health issues, high level of social disadvantage and significant percentage of families where English is not the functional language.
- Families continue to feel the 'strain' of Covid 19, especially in relation to job insecurity, financial pressure, lack of outdoor activity, inability to rely on extended family for support, lack of usual support groups and networks particularly in relation to mental health.
- Oldham is still an area of high infection and risk. Rates have increased from 50 per 100,000 to 800 per 100,000 in the period September 2020 to before second lockdown in November 2020. Further local and national restrictions during the autumn term have added pressure on families and it is now accepted that long term measures will need to be in place.
- Self-isolation and bubble closures are likely to continue in the medium term. The Prime Minister recently suggested current measures until spring 2021.
- The full extent of the long term impact of Covid19 is not yet known.
- As of 20th November, there have been 3 bubble closures.
- In September 2020, the majority of pupils had not attended school for approximately six months and early baseline assessment information indicates that most have retained their prior learning but have not continued to make expected progress. All pupils are at least one term behind where they should be for their age.
- The Department for Education has added the challenge that children need to be able to access the curriculum they would be receiving if it was not for the enforced interruptions to 'normal' education. This is challenging for primary aged pupils and in particular Early Years Foundation Stage pupils, pupils with EAL or SEND.
- There are a significant number of pupils and families with additional social care needs and this number has grown since lockdown. There has been an increase in the number of Mash referrals and Early Help referrals. We have increased our communication and support for these families and this remains challenging.

- The government has launched the 'Coronavirus Catch Up Premium' which equates to £80 per pupil. School leaders need to consider how this will be best spent to accelerate pupil progress and close gaps quickly.

What is the impact of the school closure period?

We know that pupils who are disadvantaged, newly arrived, have English as an Additional Language (EAL), and/or have Special Educational Needs, are more likely to regress in their learning and have further gaps in their learning during the period of school closure. We have also to consider the effect on boys who may typically find home learning more challenging or have poorer literacy skills.

Baseline assessment information shows that:

- The vast majority of pupils did not make any progress in their learning during the school closure period.
- A percentage of pupils in every cohort regressed during school closure and this was more marked in reading in all year groups.
- The proportion of pupils on track at baseline assessment is well below that for the same period in 19/20.
- The vast majority of pupils in Key Stage two are more than 2 steps (using Target Tracker) behind their expected attainment levels.
- Progress and attainment for all year groups needs to be accelerated during this academic year with around 50 % of pupils in all cohorts needing to make more than 7 steps progress and some of these needing to make 8 or 9 steps (compared to the usual 6 steps progress target).
- Progress of this amount will need to be made overtime therefore the progress of these children will be tracked carefully by teachers and the SLT through the identification of key groups on Target Tracker.
- Although progress needs to be accelerated for all there are particular challenges for reading and writing across the school and Y1, Y2, Y5 and Y6 due to the time available before transition to other key stages.

Additionally the range of challenges that we continually face have been taken into account:

- Children enter the EYFS at both Nursery and Reception significantly below age related expectations in Communication, Language and Literacy and the majority of other areas of learning.
- Children need higher levels of fluency in English in order to be able to read and write at an age appropriate level.
- Regular attendance is challenging for identified families with illness and extended absences affecting overall attendance rates.
- Review of school funding leading to school budget reduction and potential loss of flexibility in meeting needs.
- A significant reduction in Local Authority services to support schools.
- Significant difficulty in Children's Special Educational Needs being recognised early enough and enabling support to meet need due to limited resources.
- Thresholds for access to Social Care services have risen making it difficult to access support for families increasing the onus on schools. The 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020' document places increased accountability on schools for the safeguarding of children

- The introduction of universal free school meals and universal credit has changed the eligibility criteria for FSM. Many children are not identified as disadvantaged however they do live in low income households and this is not reflected in FSM figures. Many children live in increased poverty.

We have a good understanding of the barriers to learning that are experienced by our children. Most of our children, including those who are identified as disadvantaged, often have more than one barrier to overcome.

These include but are not limited to:

- A language deficit - both a gap in vocabulary and a lack of ability to communicate and to manipulate language for effect.
- Lack of access to and experiences of stage appropriate written text, and lack of opportunities to share the text with an adult.
- A lack of modelled literacy in the home at all levels and, in particular pupils for any pupils working at greater depth who need access to higher order language
- Existing gaps and misconceptions in learning can compound the existing lack resilience and independence shown in the classroom.
- Emotional wellbeing - which impacts on behaviour for learning, attendance, self-esteem and sometimes on personal safety.
- Limited social skills - lack of social interaction skills, difficulty in accepting responsibility for their role in relationships and within conflict.
- Self- Regulation of emotions and learning - difficulties managing anger and their own emotions and being able to listen, reason and think creatively.
- Parental/carer involvement - opportunities to engage with school, to attend school activities and get support for engagement in learning and homework.
- Limited cultural and enrichment opportunities - lack of wider experiences also limit language and understanding.
- Higher mobility - overcoming some of these barriers is a long process. When children, who may already have additional barriers to learning join the school late in their primary career, the impact of the school is lessened due to the lack of time in school. In addition this impacts on social relationships and progress.
- International New Arrivals - children joining with no experience of schooling in Britain and often no spoken English can lead to disengagement, it also requires support to access the basic curriculum.
- Basic needs - for some children lack of breakfast before school leads to hunger and disengagement within the classroom. Many children live in challenging home circumstances.
- Many families are vulnerable and require high levels of support from both the academy and children's services.
- The vast majority of pupils enter school in EYFS significantly below age related expectations. Around half of those joining in reception may not have attended nursery or pre-school and have identified SLCN needs

Additional barriers to learning during the school closure period and while Government guidelines around social distancing and self-isolation are in place include:

- Access to technology and devices to support online learning is variable. Where there are devices, not all parents have felt confident in accessing the materials.
- Access to Wi-Fi and data allowance also affected the uptake of online learning during lockdown.
- Where children are living in large families, there are additional constraints such as sharing devices, finding space to work, family routines being unsettled and children who care for their siblings.
- During lockdown, paper resources were made available to supplement online resources, however the take up for these was also variable.
- The percentage of pupils accessing online learning between March and July was low: only 35% regularly accessed the work set with another 16% attempting work but not regularly. 72% of pupils accessed paper learning packs.
- Children who typically need practical resources and scaffolds to support their learning, have limited or no access to them e.g. pupils with SEND, children in EYFS and KS1, low prior attainment.
- Many children have spent little time exercising or outdoors.
- Children have less time to interact with their peers and develop friendships.
- Some families are not fully engaging with the government guidance around children mixing outside of school and this could affect attendance should children be infectious.
- Since lockdown, there has been an increase in extended absence to overseas countries to visit relatives or to update documentation which leads to prolonged gaps in learning.
- There was a significant number of parents who were anxious about returning their children to full time schooling and this has affected attendance during phased return and the first term of this academic year.

What the research tells us:

EEF Impact of school closures on the attainment gap: Rapid Evidence Assessment

- School closures are likely to reverse progress made to narrow the attainment gap in previous years.
- Disadvantaged pupils will have been disproportionately negatively affected by the school closures, sustained support will be needed to catch up.
- Effective remote learning will mitigate the extent to which the gap widens.
- It is unlikely that a single 'catch-up' strategy will be effective.
- Supporting pupils to work independently can improve outcomes (*links to metacognition and MPTA scaffolding framework*).

Nationally, Ofsted has just published a report (November 2020) setting out the main findings from its 'fact finding' visits to schools earlier this term. This expresses concern about lost learning across the age ranges and highlights specific concerns around early years child development; setbacks in particular areas of education, including children's stamina for writing and reading; the impact of school closure on vulnerable children and mental health; and physical fitness. The report found that children who were well supported at home were most able to cope with the school closure period. Children with SEND and those vulnerable to poor outcomes were highlighted as being most affected in respect of their care and education. The report notes school leaders' and staff resilience, but also reflects the impact of COVID on staff shortages and resources. **The experience of Harmony matches the report's main conclusions.**

Taken from **DfE Coronavirus (Covid19) Catch Up Premium**

Schools should use this funding for specific activities to support their pupils to catch up for lost teaching over the previous months, in line with the guidance on [curriculum expectations for the next academic year](#). Schools have the flexibility to spend their funding in the best way for their cohort and circumstances.

Our Priorities for the use of the Catch Up Funding

We aim to ensure that:

- Pupils' well-being and safety are prioritised and supported, basic needs are being met and social skills developed.
- Speaking, listening, reading, writing and number fluency are prioritised and enable access to the wider curriculum.
- The curriculum is revised, matching pupil needs and prioritising catch up.
- Progress for all pupils is maximised through Quality First Teaching including assessment, planning, modelling, scaffolding and reflection.
- Support and intervention is focussed with those who need it most.

We recognise that we need to accelerate the progress of all our pupils, however we also know that there are some key year groups that we need to prioritise in the short term:

Children in years 5 and 6: neither of these year groups had any formal education during school closure or phased reopening. They need to be well prepared for the next phase in their education and the transition to secondary school. They have the least time in school in which to catch up. Evidence indicates that children who achieve well and are literate and numerate when leaving primary school, achieve better in a wide range of curriculum subjects.

Across years 3 and 4, reading and writing gaps need to be addressed quickly in order to enable access to the wider curriculum.

Quality for all children in the classroom

We have a high expectation for all children, and know that the best way for the children to catch up on lost learning is to access high quality, consistently excellent teaching. Strategies to ensure this include:

- Emphasizing spoken language and verbal interaction through: reading aloud, discussing books with young children facilitating early interventions including REAL, Welkomm and NELI.
- Embedding effective formative assessment including: use of learning objectives & success criteria, quality questioning, providing effective feedback and opportunities to act on this and enabling pre and post teach.
- Developing the curriculum approach and the pedagogy for learning including: metacognition and cooperative learning.
- Embedding the core principles of Metacognition into learning across the curriculum focussing particularly on: activating prior learning, modelling and instruction, guided and independent practice and reviewing learning.
- Facilitating high quality, ongoing CPD focussing on Quality First teaching.
- Implementing a recognised systematic approach to phonics, Read, Write inc. across foundation stage and key stage one with focussed intervention in years 2 and 3.
- Implementing the White Rose Maths scheme of work, supplementing this with online learning resources to enhance onsite and remote learning.

- Enabling the effective deployment of additional adults, implementing the principles of MPTA training to facilitate independence and avoid over-supporting children.
- Implementing the Remote Learning strategy including: providing onsite, hybrid distanced learning; developing staff expertise and the role of remote learning champions; teaching pupils to use scaffolds to support their learning and to develop their independence; enabling providing home learning scaffolds and videos to embed these with pupils and parents; and enabling access to remote learning both online and paper.

Enhancement of Provision

We provide all our children with additional enrichment opportunities throughout their time at Alt. This includes increasing their vocabulary, improving their spoken English and a consistent focus on reading development. We facilitate a range of high quality first hand experiences aimed at improving their local and general knowledge and enhancing their personal qualities and developing character.

These include:

- A focus on the commitment to the Harmony Pledge including: opportunities to play a musical instrument (whole class brass) to act on the stage (Shakespeare festival) and to take part in a residential (Robinwood in year 6 - although this year, this will not go ahead).
- Identification of and introduction to Alt's Top Ten - with piece of music, artwork, literature, moment in history and scientific invention. Study in each class of the famous person after whom their class is named.
- Provision of accelerated reader across key stage 2, encouraging word millionaires and creating an appetite for reading.
- Provision of dedicated safeguarding officer to support care for those with additional social needs.
- Provision of part time attendance officer to engage with parents and pupils whose attendance is an issue.

Catch Up Funding Allocation 20-21

The Catch Up Premium allocation for the academic year 2020-21 is £23,920. The table shows how we intend to allocate the funds.

Use of funding	Cost	Intended Impact
Enable straight aged classes in years 5 and 6: increasing teacher/pupil ratio and enabling focussed support.	£15,738	Children have more opportunities to work directly with the teacher supported within a small group.
Increase TA support across KS2: supporting learners in class & teachers to prepare and allocate remote learning.		Pre and post teach will enable catch up and enhance progress. Enable teachers to supplement onsite learning with remote learning.
Accelerated reader across KS2	£4,202	Children across key stage 2 are developing their reading fluency and comprehension

		skills. Reading for enjoyment is prioritised.
Year 5 targeted support through maths through online tutoring : Third Space 2 terms	£3,980	Identified pupils make good progress in maths enabling them to catch up in order to access age appropriate objectives in year 6.

Impact of the Catch Up Premium Funding

Taken from **DfE Coronavirus (Covid19) Catch Up Premium**

As with all government funding, school leaders must be able to account for how this money is being used to achieve our central goal of schools getting back on track and teaching a normal curriculum as quickly as possible.

Given their role in ensuring schools spend funding appropriately and in holding schools to account for educational performance, governors and trustees should scrutinise schools' approaches to catch-up from September, including their plans for and use of catch-up funding. This should include consideration of whether schools are spending this funding in line with their catch-up priorities, and ensuring appropriate transparency for parents.

We intend to monitor and evaluate the impact of the funding in the following ways:

The Strategy for the Coronavirus (Covid19) Catch Up Premium will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as part of the academy monitoring and evaluation cycle. This strategy document will be reviewed and updated on a termly basis throughout the academic year. The academy will participate in external and peer review processes during this year which will consider the impact of the premium through this process.

The Board of Trustees will be reassured that the catch up strategies are having an impact on pupil learning through the use of Trust monitoring procedures. The Trust monitors the quality of provision in its academies thorough the following processes:

- Analysing data and the context of the academy through the termly Progress and Standards meetings.
- Termly stocktake meetings with the Chair of the Progress and Standards Committee.
- Peer Review reports which are fed back to the Performance and Standards Committee.
- Feedback from parents, staff and pupils through termly forums and surveys.
- Standards moderation activity at local cluster, hub and Trust wide level.

The trust has supported its academies by

- Providing support and guidance to leaders through the Learning Matters Steering Group; guidance for the Recovery Curriculum and Baseline Assessment; and a (Policy, Practice Review) PPR for Home Learning.
- Producing data packs that support analysis of pupil and cohort need, challenge and support through the Progress and Standards monitoring process.
- Providing a template and example guidance for this report with LMSG discussion and support.
- Additional resources for remote learning, including ICT support for implementation.

School self-evaluation and monitoring shows the following strengths:

To be completed as part of the termly academy monitoring process and updated

Appendix 1

An independent review of the use of the Pupil Premium was carried out by the Rosendale Research School in October 2018. The review included a number of classroom visits, a documentation review focusing on the Academy Pupil Premium plan, meetings with senior leaders, discussions with teachers and support staff, and a meeting with a group of pupils.

We know that many of the findings from this review will apply to the Coronavirus closure period and its impact especially as those who have been most affected are those who are disadvantaged, and so the following will be taken into consideration.

The following is a summary of the findings:

Review

The review included classroom visits, a documentation review, meetings with senior leaders, meetings with teaching and learning staff and a meeting with pupils.

1. The Academy strategy plan for tackling educational disadvantage is of high quality. The values that underpin it are clear. These came to life in discussion with pupils, with teachers and support staff. Implementing inclusive teaching and learning is at the heart of the strategy.
2. The strategy will be further enhanced by some short, medium and long-term outcomes, and a clearly defined goal for the work on co-operative learning and closing the vocabulary gap. Ongoing, regular high quality CPD is the key to embedding these strategies over time.
3. The long-term strategies being adopted should empower teachers in the classroom to maximise learning. This is important in the context of increasing disadvantage but declining pupil premium eligibility in Oldham. These strategies will be effective for vulnerable pupils who are not eligible for Pupil Premium.
4. The pupils we met are very proud of their school. They are supportive of each other, spoke using subject specific language and their broad, rich curriculum. They valued their PSHE lessons: 'we learn about how vulnerable others are' and wanting to know what it would be like to be educated in Africa.
5. Pupils also spoke about the high expectations of them: 'If you are just on track, they push you'. They spoke articulately about the theme of respect, and how it helps to facilitate independence: 'we share ideas from each other', 'in class, the teacher will put us with children we don't know, so we get to know them'
6. Both pastoral and academic staff are all able to articulate the school's strategy, particularly the focus on language and vocabulary. Teaching Assistants understood the importance of creating independent learners
7. Meetings with teachers initially focussed on barriers to learning for disadvantage pupils. These include: language difficulties; lack of vocabulary and knowledge; lack of emotional wellbeing; lack of cultural capital; and lack of independence.
8. TA discussions were positive. They modelled positive regard for the community: 'This is our school. This is our community'. They provide a range of academic and pastoral support which

includes: pre and post teaching to enable access to learning and reduce cognitive load; cooperative learning strategies and other support in class; and responding to children's needs.

9. There was also discussion about attendance and punctuality, where staff explained about the efforts they put in, and a respect for / commitment to the community: breakfast clubs; knocking on doors; and alarm calls. However, this, was done with a recognition that there is a need to avoid a dependency culture. There was agreement that a whole school approach to improving attendance was vital. Senior leaders stated that attendance is still lower than preferable for disadvantaged pupils.

Michelle Dickens

Executive Principal 20th November 2020