

Diminishing the Difference Strategy

Achievement through equity

Introduction

Introduction from Principal Assistant Headteacher & Head of Sixth Form

At Kings Langley Sixth Form we are committed to ensuring that young people, regardless of their own personal or socio-economic status, are able to succeed and achieve their aspirations. Whilst much less is known about the national attainment of disadvantaged students in the 16-19 phase, we know that at Kings Langley School, the attainment difference of disadvantaged or previously disadvantaged students, in comparison to non-disadvantaged students is much lower to that of Hertfordshire and that of the national average.

Nationally, the attainment gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students is around half a grade less in every A-Level. The immediate and long term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has caused this gap to increase. At Kings Langley Sixth Form, our data highlights that whilst there is a difference, we are reducing this gap. The strategy outlined in this document harnesses the values promoted throughout all we do as a sixth form, so that we can further diminish the difference.

Differences in attainment impact progression to further or higher education, or transitions into the labour market. Attainment differences matter and as a Sixth Form it is the aim of this strategy to identify how we can ensure that being disadvantaged does not limit the ability to progress. We stand firm in our commitment to make sure that we continue to diminish the difference between students of different economic backgrounds so that all young people achieve their aspirations and where financial barriers to achieving these are removed and assumptions of other barriers are suppressed.

Whilst we recognise the impact of supporting students through the use of the bursary scheme, we also appreciate that it is not purely financial barriers that exist. Our strategy understands that more must be done to support young people, to ensure that they fulfil their potential, and to unlock this potential for life.

Evidence-based research identifies that whilst there is a difference in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students, the variation between institutions is small whereas the differences within institutions can be significant. At Kings Langley Sixth Form, we seek to address this, diminishing the difference within our community by increasing opportunity.

Diminishing the Difference Values

In line with our sixth form values and wider character education foundation, we hold the following values in this strategy:

Accountability

Empowerment

Integrity

Tenacity

Responsibility

In order to achieve a culture of inclusion and belonging, in which everyone acknowledges and understands how diversity enriches our cultural and societal capital, we outline the foundations of our charter in four commitments:

Commitment A – Be proactive in providing students with opportunities that develop aspiration, regardless of their own personal and socio-economic status.

Commitment B – Ensure that equity is communicated to stakeholders in a way that empowers and increases confidence in obtaining financial and non-financial resources.

Commitment C – Further develop high-quality teaching, assessment and an inclusive curriculum which responds to the needs all students and stimulates agency and belonging.

Commitment D – Develop a reputation where the sixth form climate and environment for learning, encourages greater participation and aspiration from students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

These actions are embedded in our sixth form improvement strategy with explicit actions identified. Impact is measured, evaluated and reflected upon in order to identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

Diminishing the Difference Strategy

Our Strategy

We commit ourselves to creating a culture where young people feel safe, happy and confident. This strategy is designed to communicate the values and commitments that we, the whole sixth form community (students and staff), pledge our responsibility to achieve.

Our strategy to diminish the difference for students who are socio-economically disadvantaged concentrate on five main areas:

- Attitudes & Relationships
- Careers Information and Guidance (CIAG)
- Education & Curriculum
- Leadership & Management
- Personal Development

Students and families should refer to the 16-19 Bursary Funding policy for further information regarding accessing funding for young people experiencing financial hardship or who qualify for financial assistance:

[Bursary - Kings Langley \(kls.herts.sch.uk\)](https://kls.herts.sch.uk)

This strategy acknowledges and refers to the following research and reports:

- Measuring the disadvantage gap in 16-19 education, 2021, Education Policy Institute
[Measuring the disadvantage gap in 16-19 education - Education Policy Institute \(epi.org.uk\)](https://www.epi.org.uk)
- Place and belonging in school: why it matters today, 2020, Institute of Education
[Place and belonging in school: Why it matters today | National Education Union \(neu.org.uk\)](https://www.neu.org.uk)
- State of the nation 2022: children and young people's wellbeing, 2023, Department for Education
[State of the nation 2022: children and young people's wellbeing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

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Strategy Areas

Attitudes & Relationships

Studies and research identify that a significant area of impact on a students education outcomes is the attitude and relationship both the student, and their parents/carers have with formal education. It is often a misconception that economic disadvantage influences aspiration but evidence does suggest that local influences, particularly to the local norms, beliefs and expectations about what is important in life, does influence whether students continue onto A-Level, Post-16 study. Our strategy therefore emphasises the value of providing an inclusive community culture that provides opportunities to engage with diverse experiences and ensure that exposure to different possibilities, encourages young people and their families to gain confidence and belonging.

Parents and families play a key role; there is clear alignment between what the parents say they want for the young people and what the young people aspire to themselves. Supporting aspirations therefore means working with parents as well as our young people, particularly where families face disadvantages themselves.

Careers Information & Guidance

Aspirations are both short term and long term and young people may aspire to different things simultaneously. The full range of possibilities for educational outcomes and jobs is often hidden or unimagined, particularly when there is little experience in families of higher education and professional jobs. This means that young people need informed and detailed CIAG to take the pathways that are likely to lead to fulfilment of the longer-term ambitions.

Our strategy focuses on ensuring that all stakeholder are knowledgeable about the opportunities, pathways and possible destinations available, alongside the support that all young people can access. We focus on ensuring that aspirations should not be suppressed by assumptions that barriers exist and that opportunities are not applicable to specific student groups.

Education & Curriculum

If we are to provide an ambitious curriculum for all we must also accept that not all students and young people start from the same point and that some will require more support and time to reach the desired outcome. We can diminish the difference between disadvantaged students by identify the academic barriers that each student faces, plan appropriate strategies to support them to overcome these barrier, and finally setting the success criteria for them.

We need to ensure that academic curriculum and the wider provision are inter-related and at post-16, students may be more conscious of the differences between themselves and their peers. Our strategy seeks to ensure that young people feel empowered and confident to take responsibility for their educational development by seizing opportunities that support increased performance and outcomes.

It is important to highlight that there is no substitute for high-quality teaching where teachers know every individual students needs. Our strategy therefore prioritises educational excellence as outlined in our five-year strategy document.

Strategy Areas

Leadership & Management

To ensure that we successfully diminish the difference for young people it is crucial that we establish a clear vision for what we wish to achieve, how to implement change, and finally, ensure that we are accountable for ensuring that we see impact. Leadership and management is not limited to the sixth form leadership team but across the whole school. Students in the lower school are our main source of recruitment into A-Levels and how we prepare and lead our young people through their GCSEs and into their A-Levels is an area for all school staff to contribute to.

Our strategy recognises the importance of ensuring that we adopt not only a sixth form wide approach, but that it has synergy with the strategy of KS3 and KS4, namely the Pupil Premium Policy.

Personal Development

We believe that post-16 education and experience provides the key to social mobility and our strategy ensures that we give students the strong foundations in the knowledge, understanding and skills which lead to both academic and personal success. Our strategy is underpinned by a culture of high aspirations, inclusion and ensuring the our students develop a flourishing DNA. Through our focus on educational excellence, student experience and a strong, positive, community culture we aim to have every individual having a strong believe in their own abilities, a sense of pride and belonging, and being fully prepared for their future.

Every student attending Kings Langley Sixth Form are provided with the opportunity to grow and express themselves as an individual, to feel that they are preparing themselves for a positive future and equipping themselves with the knowledge to ensure that this happens.