## Affordable School Network- Case Study from Drove/Croft

**Date:** 16 May 2025

**Title:** Primary School Pupil Premium and Affordability Initiatives

**Purpose/Objective:** To discuss and share strategies for supporting pupils from low-income families, focusing on the use of a checklist for primary schools and wider affordability initiatives.

## Executive Summary

Emma presented on the various initiatives undertaken at The Croft and Drove primary schools to support pupils from low-income families, highlighting the use of a checklist to identify needs and the implementation of various support measures. Key discussion points included addressing barriers to accessing resources, school initiatives, and future plans for ongoing support. A key decision was made to continue and refine the affordability initiatives based on the survey results and feedback.

## Discussion Points

### Checklist and Pupil Premium Funding

* Emma explained the development of the Affordable Schools checklist following a network meeting and its use in identifying actions related to school affordability.
* Emma’s post is funded through pupil premium, which influences the initiatives put in place by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
* The school's safeguarding team, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs), added a "low income" category to their safeguarding concerns in CPOMS.
* For separated parents, the school ensures they are aware of single-person council tax discounts and other available financial support.

### Classroom and Teacher-Based Activities

* Class teachers are aware of pupils receiving pupil premium, asylum seeker/refugee families, those with unstable accommodation, and young carers.
* Home visits are conducted for all new starters, with Emma often joining for asylum-seeking families to assess potential financial difficulties.
* During home visits, staff are vigilant for indicators such as access to white goods, availability of toys, sleeping arrangements, and digital access.
* Hard copy materials are used for homework to improve accessibility.
* Age-appropriate stationery packs are provided to children from families with financial issues.
* Homework is completed within the school day for children who lack suitable facilities at home, such as those in temporary accommodation.
* A homework club is available for young carers.

### Barriers to Accessing Resources and Support

* Language is a significant barrier, with 44 different languages spoken by families across the schools and a high percentage of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL).
* Bilingual teaching staff and teaching assistants, along with Google Translate, are used to overcome language barriers.
* The school office proactively contacted families eligible for Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) vouchers to ensure they understood how to claim them.
* Personal hygiene kits are provided when needed, such as during school residentials where it was discovered that some families were sharing toothbrushes and hairbrushes.
* Pre-loved uniform and PE kit are available, although storage is an ongoing issue.
* The school is collecting pre-loved swimming kits due to concerns about affordability and has arranged for donations of lightweight long tops and leggings for Muslim girls who require modesty costumes.
* Shoe Aid provides new shoes and trainers upon request.
* A Christmas shop is organised where staff re-gift unwanted items, allowing children from low-income families to choose presents for their parents.

### School Initiatives and Partner Agencies

* Emma provided examples of referrals made to various partner agencies.
* Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) offered by employers, such as Amazon, provide debt management, mental health support, and legal advice.
* Amazon has been particularly supportive in providing advice and support to families.
* The school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCO) asks parents during Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) annual reviews whether they are claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for their children.

### Next Steps and Future Plans

* A regular review cycle is needed to ensure the information on the school website is up to date.
* Mapping the costs in schools against the full calendar year to give parents as much notice as possible regarding school costs.
* Caroline to investigate whether the school can receive universal height and weight measurement data back from the healthcare trusts to identify inequalities and trends.
* The school will rerun the cost of school survey at the start of each school year and roll out a Key Stage 2 assembly to raise awareness of available support.

### Q&A and Closing Remarks

* Emma said she would circulate the survey questions that they carried out with pupils: [https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=QF83S2NHt06j\_RFeYu7GMa4uNi8g1x1ErDnhjZHAVkJUOEQ4OE5VRTI1TDROQkFPUDBPWUwxUVFTNi4u&sharetoken=0UJdDd6ojpcq2zxgkHQH](https://cas5-0-urlprotect.trendmicro.com/wis/clicktime/v1/query?url=https%3a%2f%2fforms.office.com%2fPages%2fShareFormPage.aspx%3fid%3dQF83S2NHt06j%5fRFeYu7GMa4uNi8g1x1ErDnhjZHAVkJUOEQ4OE5VRTI1TDROQkFPUDBPWUwxUVFTNi4u%26sharetoken%3d0UJdDd6ojpcq2zxgkHQH&umid=9410b107-0752-4577-9eaa-2a8cdd0e7c9a&rct=1747151710&auth=dab668a19493c9fb79815b5a8321c6db1ed5b90b-cbd782b553d447c7124fe952bc15c4b5d0d47f8b)
* Caroline thanked Emma for the comprehensive and inspiring presentation.
* The school will continue and refine its affordability initiatives based on the survey results and feedback received, ensuring that support is accessible and tailored to the needs of low-income families.
  + Rationale: The initiatives have proven effective in addressing financial barriers and improving the well-being of students.

## Next Steps

* Caroline will follow up with healthcare trust colleagues regarding the height and weight measurement data.
* Emma will distribute the cost of school survey questions to the attendees via Caroline.
* The school will prepare to rerun the cost of school survey at the start of the next school year.