

Equity

Equity is an explicit thread in all our hub work and is a fundamental part of the principle in our hub teaching for mastery statement, which underpins all the work of the hub:

*The intention of teaching for mastery is to give all pupils (including those with SEND) access to **equitable classrooms**; classrooms where pupils can all participate and be influential, and classrooms where pupils are encouraged and supported to develop a deep connected and sustained understanding of the mathematics being explored.*

Equity in education means providing additional support to learners who need it most and relies on a belief that **all** learners can prosper in school. Equity pedagogy is an approach to education in which teachers cultivate classroom environments that better support all learners, especially those who experience cultural and material barriers both in school and the outside society (Banks & Banks, 1995).

Pupils that face barriers to learning outside school deserve more of our attention in the classroom. Equity is about providing additional support to pupils who need it most whilst believing that all pupils can flourish in the classroom. **Equity is not the same as equality** which is about ensuring all children and young people receive the same resources. Dawes (2024)

Labels, such as 'SEND' or 'disadvantaged' are intended to potentially direct more resources where needed and more specific labels, such as 'autistic' or 'EAL', can support teachers to understand the specific barriers learners may face. However, there is a danger that labels:

...can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy. For our pupils facing barriers, labels such as 'disadvantaged', 'SEND' or EAL can cause pupils to feel excluded or judged. Labelling can perpetuate stereotypes, lower expectations, and treat pupils as part of a group rather than an individual. Dawes (2024)

An equitable approach requires that adults in schools address their own cultural biases:

Capacity thinking...is also about assessing our own cultural norms in schools and classrooms that may inadvertently be alienating those who don't come from homes with similar rules and ways of doing things...Observations show that teachers can act differently towards children from working-class backgrounds in the classroom, exuding less warmth, giving less eye contact, and providing lower quality feedback... Major and Briant (2023)

Our aim is to work with schools and teachers to identify ways to overcome barriers faced by learners so that all learners have access to classrooms where they can participate fully and have the opportunity to be influential. This means using strategies which reflect the principles of Ordinary Available Inclusive Provision; strategies which are harmful to none, essential to some and beneficial to all.

References:

Dawes, M. (2024) Reflections On: Educational Equity – Belonging, Belief, Labels and Cultural Bias <https://schoolsallianceforexcellence.co.uk/educational-equity-belonging-belief-labels-and-cultural-bias/>

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McGee Banks, C. A., & Banks, J. A. (1995). Equity pedagogy: An essential component of multicultural education. *Theory Into Practice*, 34(3), 152–158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849509543674>