



What is 'deprivation' and what does it look like in our school?

At Cumbria Academy for Autism, we are strongly committed to supporting all of our children and their individual needs.

The government introduced Pupil Premium Funding in April 2011. In 2012–13 schools were allocated a total of £1.25 billion funding for children from low-income families who were eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from families with parents in the Armed Forces. This funding has supported many thousands of children and continues to do so.

Whilst Pupil Premium funding is used effectively to support those individuals whose families are eligible for the grant, it is important that we consider the term 'Deprivation' and what it means in the context of our setting.

In some cases, there are some of our parents who struggle to work due to their own health, or due to the needs of their children. They may be unable to work, or they may have tried tirelessly to find a role that fits within their child's school day, only to find that anxiety, stress or behavioural issues mean that more often than not, they are pulled away from their work. This can make holding down a job, incredibly difficult. It is for this reason that some parents may fall into the lower-income category and therefore apply for Pupil Premium.

However, for us at Cumbria Academy for Autism, 'deprivation' does not only reflect an individual's financial situation.

Some of our children are deprived in different ways. They are particularly deprived on a social and emotional level as a result of their Autism diagnosis. Social situations and experiences may be over-stimulating, cause high anxiety, or may be deemed unsafe for some of our individuals. This may have caused a reluctance to try new things with these children, at fear of putting them in danger or causing further emotional distress.

It is therefore our duty, as a school staff, to ensure we invest our time, energy and money in all of our pupils, ensuring that our life-skills education acknowledges this type of deprivation and addresses it. We want to ensure that all children, regardless of diagnosis, finances, physical difficulties or mental health issues, develop as a whole person during their time at our school.