## Primary teachers' perceptions of poverty

**Steve Puttick** 

Steven.puttick@bishopg.ac.uk

**Elizabeth Farrar** 

Elizabeth.Farrar@bishop.ac.uk

Adam Hounslow-Eyre

Adam.Hounslow-Eyre@bishopg.ac.uk

Why are teachers' perceptions of poverty important?

- -Number of young people and families they interact with
- -Amount of time spent with young people
- -Dominant background of teachers

### The Adastra Partnership

- •Adastra means "To the stars"
- An informal group of likeminded schools
- Similar contexts
- Share good practice/moderation etc
- All interested in considering What is 'Poverty'? What does it look like in our schools? What are we doing to address these issues?

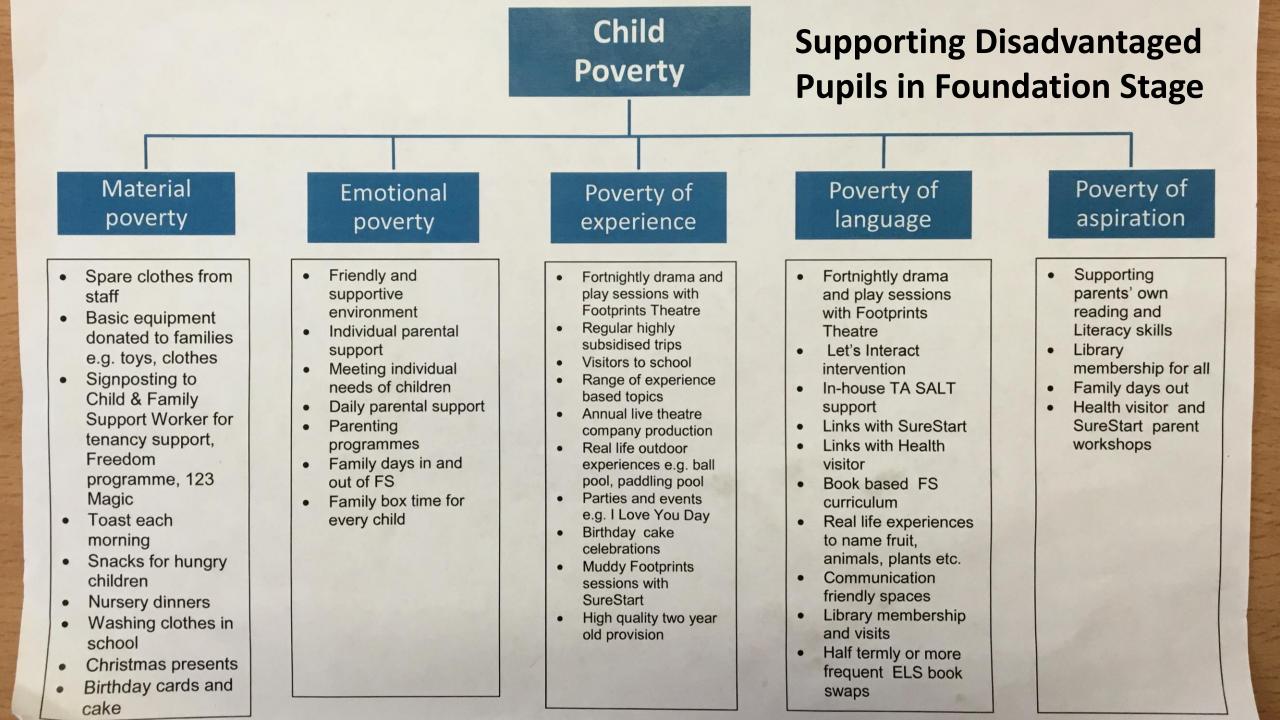
### Study design

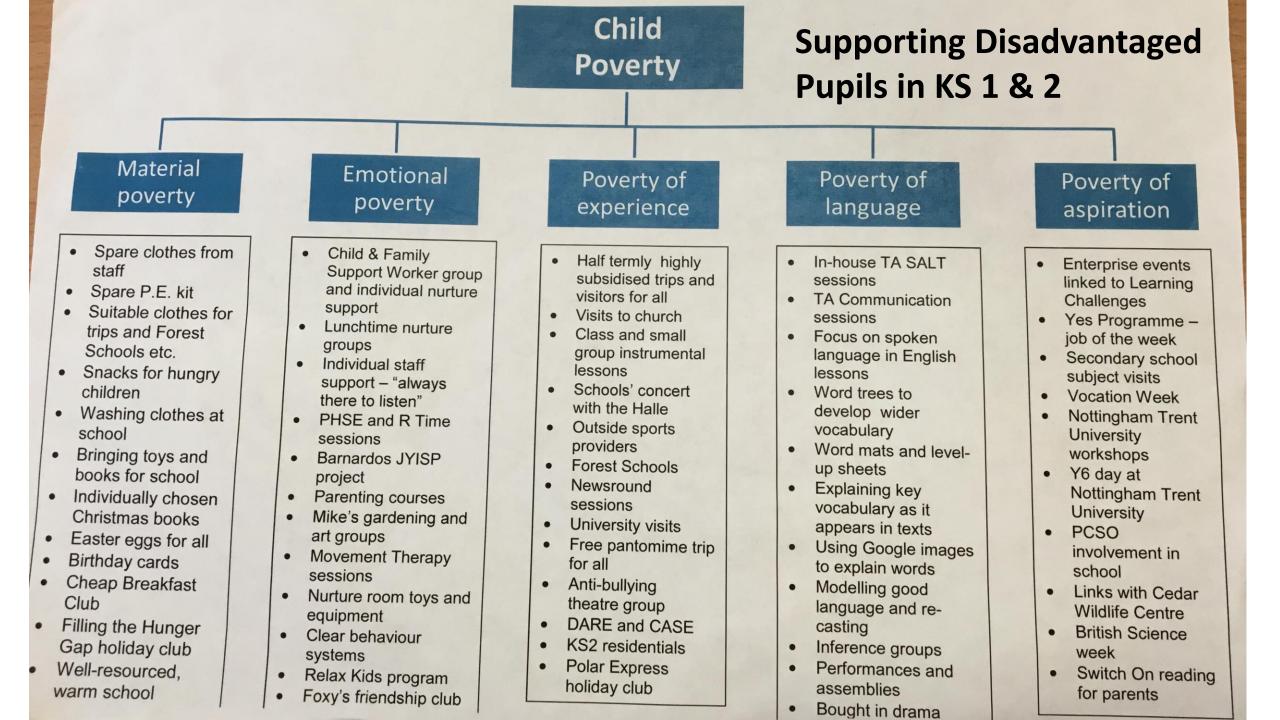
- 5 researchers
- •5 schools
- Ethnographic approach ('rapid ethnography'? 'time recurrent')
- Phase one: 5 days each, per school (June August 2016)
- Generating data through observation, interviews (students, teachers, TAs, parents, governors), photographs, documentary analysis

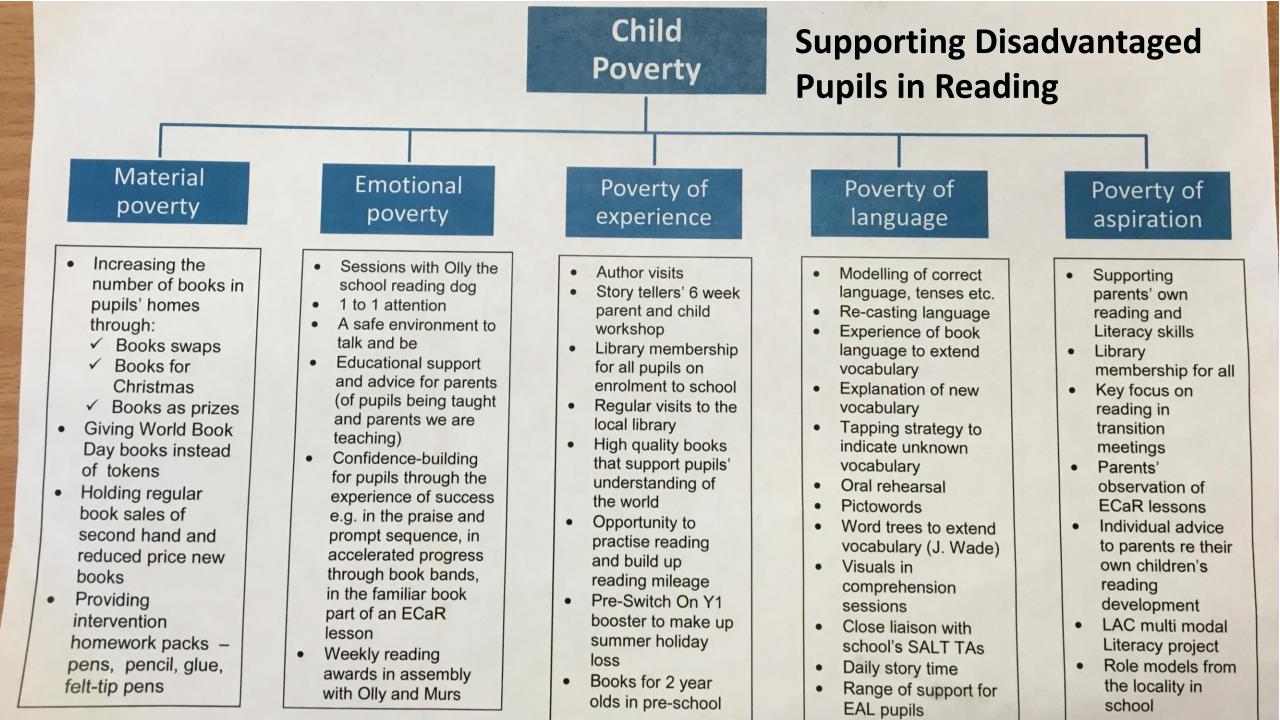
The small amount of research that does exist suggests that teachers, including student teachers, do indeed hold stereotypical ideas about pupils and parents and consequently locate the causes of educational underachievement due to poverty within the pupil or the home rather than within institutional structures and practices...

(Thompson, McNicholl & Menter, 2016, p.217)

The pervasiveness of such deficit thinking and stereotyping, even among those teachers and student teachers apparently committed to educational equality, can lead to low expectations of poor students (Love, 2004) Emerging findings...







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Dimensions of poverty
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# Emotional poverty believed to be the most significant...

#### Emotional poverty

- Friendly and supportive environment
- Individual parental support
- Meeting individual needs of children
- Daily parental support
- Parenting programmes
- Family days in and out of FS
- Family box time for every child

#### Emotional poverty

- Child & Family Support Worker group and individual nurture support
- Lunchtime nurture
  groups
- Individual staff support – "always there to listen"
- PHSE and R Time sessions
- Barnardos JYISP project
- Parenting courses
- Mike's gardening and art groups
- Movement Therapy sessions
- Nurture room toys and equipment
- Clear behaviour systems
- Relax Kids program
- Foxy's friendship club

#### Emotional poverty

- Sessions with Olly the school reading dog
- 1 to 1 attention
- A safe environment to talk and be
- Educational support and advice for parents (of pupils being taught and parents we are teaching)
- Confidence-building for pupils through the experience of success e.g. in the praise and prompt sequence, in accelerated progress through book bands, in the familiar book part of an ECaR lesson
- Weekly reading awards in assembly with Olly and Murs

Suggestion of a complex, multi-layered conception of poverty

- Multiple, inter-related dimensions
- Not just the deficit model suggested in the literature
- Appreciation of structural issues

'within 't'estate...they're either unemployed or they're on a very low income so that...has links to drug misuse, alcohol abuse and mental health... Illiteracy is quite high in our parents which has a massive impact...'

(Family liaison teacher)

'I know where she's coming from. She's got a mental health issue and she's accessed mental health services so she's on ESA – she's now had to go on job seekers...but she's got a toddler who is not yet entitled to our 2 year [old] provision, so in her right mind is she going to work 16hrs a week to have to pay for a childminder?...So you're forever in that vicious cycle...'

(Family liaison teacher)

'This little boy was due to go to the pediatric service – and by the nature of how things work they sent him a letter - which he couldn't read – so he couldn't go to the appointment, so they sent him another one...'

(Family liaison teacher)

'I've had a battle trying to get that little boy back involved with the paediatric service, because his father *supposedly* failed to attend an appointment – non-attendance – but actually he couldn't read the letter you sent him. Did anyone think to ring? Did anyone chase up something so simple?' (Family liaison teacher) School / home divides: differences presenting challenges to understandings of poverty



# he EU Referendum

#### Questions raised through this first phase

- How to facilitate / enlarge the conversation across the quite different worldviews / cultures constructed in school and at home?
- Methodological challenges of working in a team of ethnographers
- Challenge of exploring perceptions of 'poverty' in ways other-than a direct question 'what do you think poverty is?'