AGENDA

SELECT COMMITTEE - PUPIL PREMIUM

Monday, 6th November, 2017, at 2.00 pm   Ask for: **Gaetano Romagnuolo**

Swale 2, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone   Telephone   **03000 416624**

Tea/Coffee will be available 15 minutes before the start of the meeting in the meeting room

Membership

Mrs L Game, Mrs C Bell, Mr A Booth, Mrs P T Cole, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Ms S Hamilton, Mr J P McInroy, Dr L Sullivan and Mr M Whiting

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS
(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

2.00 – 3.45pm   Children, Young People & Education - Linda Pickles (Principal Adviser for Primary School Improvement) & Celia Buxton (Principal Adviser for Secondary, PRUs and Special schools) (Pages 3 - 4)

4.00 – 4.45pm   Mr Roger Gough (Cabinet Member for CYPE) and Mrs Shellina Prendergast (Deputy Cabinet Member for CYPE) (Pages 5 - 6)

Pupil Premium Supporting Information – (Pages 7 – 80)
EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

At the end of the public session, Members of the Committee should remain in the meeting room for 20 minutes for summing up

John Lynch
Head of Democratic Services
03000 410466

Friday, 27 October 2017

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<u>Pupil Premium Select Committee</u>

<u>Hearing 1</u>

Monday 6th November 2017

Witness Guide for Members

Below are suggested themes and questions. They have been provided in advance to the witnesses to allow them to prepare for the types of issues that Members may be interested to explore. All Members are welcome to ask these questions or pose additional ones to the witnesses via the Committee Chairman.

<u>Themes and Questions</u>

Linda Pickles, Principal Adviser for Primary School Improvement and Celia Buxton, Principal Adviser for Secondary, PRUs and Special schools

The session with begin with a presentation which will provide an introduction to the Pupil Premium and offer some background information, particularly in relation to Kent.

- Please describe and contextualise the different types of Pupil Premium available in England in terms of eligibility and funding.

- Who are the groups of vulnerable learners currently supported by the Pupil Premium in Kent?

- In your opinion, how effective is the adoption of free school meals (FSM) as a measure of disadvantage to determine eligibility to Pupil Premium funding?

- To what extent are the Pupil Premium, the Early Years Pupil Premium and the Pupil Premium Plus closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged learners and their peers in Kent? Please provide some figures.

- What are the most effective strategies and interventions associated with the Pupil Premium that have proven successful in narrowing the attainment gap?

- What can KCC do, if anything, to improve the effectiveness of the Pupil Premium, the Early Years Pupil Premium and the Pupil Premium Plus in narrowing the attainment gap between vulnerable pupils and their peers in Kent?

- Are there any other issues, with relevance to the review, that you would like to raise with the Committee?

<u>Pupil Premium Select Committee</u>

<u>Hearing 1</u>

Monday 6th November 2017

Witness Guide for Members

Below are suggested themes and questions. They have been provided in advance to the witnesses to allow them to prepare for the types of issues that Members may be interested to explore. All Members are welcome to ask these questions or pose additional ones to the witnesses via the Committee Chairman.

<u>Themes and Questions</u>

Mr Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, and Mrs Shellina Prendergast, Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, Kent County Council

- Please introduce yourselves and provide an outline of the roles and responsibilities that your posts involve.

- Please discuss the main aims of the Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners.

- In your view, what are the main benefits and challenges associated with the Pupil Premium?

- In your opinion, how effective is the adoption of free school meals (FSM) as a measure of disadvantage to determine eligibility to Pupil Premium funding?

- In your view, what more should KCC do, if anything, to improve the effectiveness of the Pupil Premium in narrowing the attainment gap between vulnerable pupils and their peers in Kent?

- Are there any other issues, with relevance to the review, that you wish to raise with the Committee?

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Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners

2016-2019

Kent
County
Council
kent.gov.uk

Contents

Vulnerable Learners Strategy 2016-19

Preface

This Vulnerable Learners Strategy brings together in one document all the actions we are taking in partnership with schools to improve outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people. It also sets out examples of good practice in schools and strategies that are having some impact in narrowing achievement gaps and promoting greater social mobility.

Our starting points, both nationally and in Kent, are a challenge. Some argue that social mobility is less in the UK now than it was some years ago. This means that the circumstances of a child's birth and the family's social and economic conditions determine more than ever the child's success in the education system and the labour market. The fact that this relationship between poverty, home background and life chances is more pronounced in the UK than in most other European counties makes it even more unacceptable.

The school system cannot solve this lack of social mobility on its own, but it can contribute a great deal to improving life chances for vulnerable children and young people. We aim to make more of a difference for those at greatest risk of poor outcomes. Schools matter and make a difference, and having access to a good school and good teaching matters even more. What matters most is that good schools are inclusive places which achieve good outcomes for all their pupils.

Education is the greatest opportunity young people have to achieve life- long benefits. At present these benefits are greater for some and far too limited for others, often through no fault of their own.

In a recent speech the Prime Minister stated that improving social mobility is a priority for the government. He said clearly that lack of social mobility is damaging for the country's economic growth and wealth creation, and represents a waste of talent which the country cannot afford. For individual children and young people who live in poor and disadvantaged circumstances, the lack of sufficient opportunity to make good progress in the education system, to have greater fluidity in the pathways that they can take and to have the chance to become more upwardly mobile, is a double disadvantage. One of the biggest challenges for the education system is to change this.

A key policy has been the introduction of the Pupil Premium, with the expectation that this funding will be used effectively to raise attainment for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and thereby close achievement gaps between these pupils and their peers. The Pupil Premium has promised much but so far it has delivered relatively little improvement in Kent and nationally. We are continuing to focus on this challenge and to find out more about, and disseminate, what works in making a difference. The Vulnerable Learners Strategy is our attempt to move this agenda forward in Kent in a more significant and joined up way.

Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director Education and Young People's Services

Vision and Priorities

"Kent should be a place where families thrive and all children learn and develop well from the earliest years so that they are ready to succeed at school, have excellent foundations for learning and are equipped well for achievement in life, no matter what their background.

We have the same expectations for every child and young person to make good progress in their learning, to achieve well and to have the best opportunities for an independent economic and social life as they become young adults.

Every child and young person should go to a good or outstanding early years setting and school, have access to the best teaching, and benefit from schools and other providers working in partnership with each other to share the best practice as they continue to improve.

Our Vision is that every child and young person, from pre-birth to age 19, and their family, who needs early help services will receive them in a timely and responsive way, so that they are safeguarded, their educational, social and emotional needs are met and outcomes are good, and they are able to contribute positively to their communities and those around them now and in the future, including their active engagement in learning and employment.

We want to ensure that vulnerable children and families have their needs met early so that they do not experience the level of challenge and difficulty in their lives that require statutory interventions. They should have the same opportunities as all other children and families to flourish, to stay safe and well and succeed in the education system."

(Source: Education and Young People's Service Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2016-19)

Introduction

This Strategy aims to identify new approaches and activities to ensure that every child and young person in Kent achieves their full potential and none is left behind. It focuses on championing better life chances and is intended to close educational achievement gaps for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Most children and young people in Kent do reach their full potential by age 18, but a sizeable minority face multiple disadvantages which have a significant limiting effect on their development and educational achievement, as well on their future life chances.

The principles which underpin this strategy are to bring together and strengthen activities currently in place to support vulnerable children and young people and to challenge existing systems and structures to do more. Across Kent, there are significant gaps between the attainment of the majority of children and young people and those from particular groups that are vulnerable to underachievement and these gaps remain persistently wide. These poorer outcomes are unacceptable.

There is an urgent need to change and review support systems and approaches to accelerate the achievement and progress of these vulnerable groups. Educational outcomes across Kent typically improve year on year at every key stage and so in order to narrow the achievement gaps for

vulnerable children and young people their outcomes must improve at an accelerated pace. This strategy sets out activities and actions to address these gaps in outcomes. The size of this challenge is clear from the evidence given below:

- In 2015 27% of children did not achieve a Good Level of Development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- 27% of learners who were in receipt of free school meals obtained 5 A* - C grades, including English and mathematics, at GCSE compared to 61% of those who are not.
- 7% of learners in receipt of free school meals go to Grammar school compared to 36% not receiving free school meals.
- Learners in receipt of free school meals are nearly six times as likely to be permanently excluded as those who are not
- 30% of the NEET cohort in January 2016 were vulnerable learners
- 14% of FSM learners in school gained entry to the top third Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) compared to 30% of non-FSM

This stark contrast in learner outcomes requires an urgent prioritisation of the support for vulnerable learners in Kent in order to ensure that the aspirations of "Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2016-19" are achieved. There has been significant investment in recent years to address this issue through a range of interventions including £50m Early Years and School Pupil Premium funding into schools and Early Years settings in 2015-16 to address the needs of children whose families are in receipt of free school meals. Although there has been some small improvement in the attainment of this group of children, particularly in the Early Years and in Primary schools, we have yet to see the full impact of this resource.

Integral to the success of the Kent Vulnerable Learners Strategy will be a relentless ambition for all senior leaders to ensure good progress and high expectations for vulnerable learners to achieve better outcomes. Effective educational leaders set high aspirations for all learners and create a high quality inclusive learning environment, targeting resources and interventions to ensure maximum impact for all including the most vulnerable, so that gaps narrow and outcomes and destinations are more positive.

The educational landscape is changing rapidly and at the same time resources are reducing. At such times of change, often the most vulnerable children, young people and families are at the highest risk of poorer educational and life outcomes. The strategy aims, therefore, to support the development of robust partnerships, identify good practice and ensure the effective use of all available resources.

Improving outcomes for vulnerable learners has been a priority for a number of national bodies and government departments, for a number of years. Sutton Trust research reveals the current state of low social mobility in the UK and the disproportionate representation of the most affluent, often those educated in independent and selective schools, in top universities and professions. The economic cost of this inequity to the country, and impact on the life choices of young people, is considerable unless change occurs.

The Sutton Trust has developed a social mobility index for all parliamentary constituencies in England exploring five key indicators of children and young people eligible for free school meals

across the stages of a learner's education pathway. Kent's profile can be seen below. The rankings are out of a total of 533 constituencies. The top 10% index is identified in green and bottom 10% in orange. Social mobility starts off generally well for children within the Early Years phase, but this gets considerably worse at the Secondary phase, where four of Kent's constituencies are ranked in the bottom 10% of the country. This change in social mobility mirrors the widening of the free school meal gaps, as children get older, that are seen in Kent Primary and Secondary schools. The rankings for professional occupations are widely variable. Social mobility is very high in some areas and very low in others.

Constituency	Social Mobility	FSM Eligibility	Early Years	Primary	Secondary	University	Professional Occupations
Ashford	Very Low	Low	144	287	425	262	447
Canterbury	High	Low	37	287	133	262	345
Dartford	Very High	Low	66	161	170	262	130
Faversham & Mid Kent	Low	Low	144	399	421	262	177
Gravesham	High	Low	80	77	139	262	327
Maidstone & The Weald	High	Low	80	161	516	262	52
Sevenoaks	Moderate	Low	66	399	433	262	92
Tonbridge & Malling	Very High	Low	80	161	52	262	142
Tunbridge Wells	Very High	Low	25	287	173	262	86
Dover	Very Low	Medium	23	399	524	262	408
Folkestone & Hythe	Moderate	Medium	18	110	502	262	387
North Thanet	Very Low	Medium	118	217	531	262	498
Sittingbourne & Sheppey	Moderate	Medium	25	287	325	262	404
South Thanet	Low	Medium	276	346	507	262	85

This strategy sets out the context for new approaches to meet the needs of vulnerable learners and significantly close achievement gaps. Kent County Council, as champion and advocate for children, young people and families, sets out in this document how we aim to ensure there is a high quality range of support, and opportunities, to enable vulnerable learners to become confident individuals, effective communicators, successful and responsive citizens, to remain healthy and to achieve the educational and life outcomes which they deserve.

The strategy also aims to ensure that the full range of Kent County Council's services and partners work together more coherently with Early Years and Childcare providers, schools and other educational settings to maximise the impact of available resources in further raising the attainment and improving the progress of the most vulnerable learners.

A strategy to close the educational gap - *Influencing Academic Achievement*

Good educational outcomes are vital to ensuring future life opportunities and outcomes. Evidence shows us that vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils have greater individual differences in academic performance than the wider population. Whilst there will be individual differences in cognitive abilities and personal attributes, a child's home background and environment, and the family's level of income, have a more powerful impact on life chances. It is the job of the education system to make more of a difference to counteracting the disadvantages some children face. This strategy focuses on four key factors which need to work together to mitigate the effect of such disadvantage and narrow educational achievement gaps.

Key factors that influence children's development, progress and educational achievement:

- Individual attributes, resilience and emotional well-being

- Parental influence, support and involvement

- High quality teaching and school leadership with moral purpose

- Effective use of resources to improve outcomes
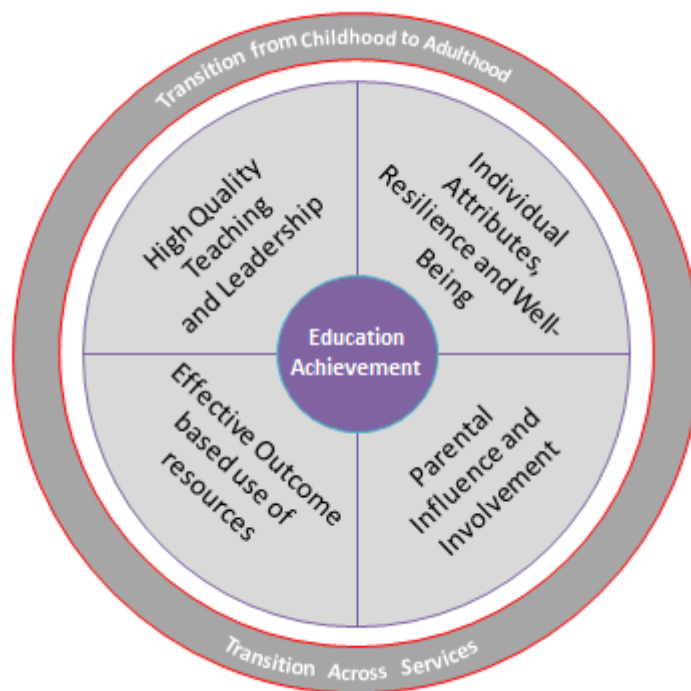
Individual Attributes, Resilience and Emotional Well-Being

Children and young people in good health, who are motivated, resilient and have positive emotional health and well-being tend to achieve well. Our focus, therefore, should be to give more priority to, and target resources for, the development of resilience and emotional well being, in and out of school.

Youth Hubs and outdoor education can complement formal academic settings and provide the opportunities for achievement and confidence building.

Children and young people who have faced adversity or trauma may have difficulties in achieving their potential. Increasing the resilience of all students and promoting a better understanding of mental well-being amongst professionals, parents, carers and young people can assist in understanding the barriers to learning.

We aim to support all schools to deliver programmes that improve well being and resilience, and to identify and support children and young people who are experiencing difficulties. We recognise that services for children and young people that are focused on emotional well-being and mental health need to be more accessible and less stigmatising for young people to seek advice and support. In re-commissioning CAMHS to deliver support more directly in schools, and in re-commissioning emotional wellbeing services available through Early Help, we aim to improve this additional support. We also expect to see greater benefit through the work of the new Health Needs Education Service.

Parental Influence and Involvement

Children's first few years of life, parental attachment and the development of language and social skills are critical for school readiness. The home environment in the early years, and good quality childcare, can help children develop well for school expectations and engagement in learning. Children's Centres and Early Years Childcare and Education settings can lay the foundations for encouraging a home learning environment that promotes future learning opportunities. The home environment will also support school transitions and life changes and development throughout the academic pathway.

Our aim is to do more to promote support for and engagement by parents in the early years and through all the stages of schooling. Schools that strive to have good parental engagement, and reach out positively to those that are hard to engage, achieve better attendance, behaviour and motivation for learning. Children who are supported by their parents do better at school.

Early Help family work focuses on working with and supporting parents. We recognise that more can always be done within family work to promote parents' involvement in their children's learning and develop more positive behaviour and attitudes towards school. This is a priority for Early Help. The Service is also able to deliver parenting programmes and to advise schools about effective programmes that engage parents in their children's learning.

Children's Centres also provide a range of parenting programmes and more effective joint working between centres and schools can help to make these activities more widely available.

The Community Learning and Skills Service provides Family Learning programmes that aim to develop parents' skills and children's learning at the same time, often with longer term impact on engaging parents in their children's learning at school.

High Quality Teaching and School Leadership

"Great schools are great schools for all children"... 'The pupil Premium – next steps'
Sutton Trust, July 2015

Leaders in schools that have been successful in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils know that there is no one single strategy which leads to success. Rather, successful school leaders, including governors, create a vision and culture, consistently communicated to staff, pupils and parents, in which the highest possible achievement of every learner is a priority and an expectation. Leaders in these schools have a resolute determination that every learner regardless of home background or starting point will succeed and they both enable and hold staff to account to achieve this. They know their schools and the needs of individual learners and use data to analyse trends, set targets and then implement the intervention strategies which will have the most impact on accelerating rates of progress.

The Sutton Trust report 2015 highlights the importance of a designated senior leader and governor who have a clear overview of how funding is being allocated, including Pupil Premium funding, and the difference it is making to the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

In addition, Ofsted noted that these schools:

"allocated their best teachers to teach intervention groups…used achievement data to check whether their approaches were effective and made adjustments accordingly"

It also identifies that Teaching Assistants can have an important role in supporting vulnerable learners but they need high quality training in order to understand their role in helping pupils learn more effectively.

A further update from Ofsted in 2014, particularly noted the association between the overall effectiveness of the school and the impact of the Pupil Premium, finding that good and outstanding schools are committed to closing the attainment gap by targeting interventions and using robust tracking systems.

A recent NFER report commissioned by the Department for Education, identifies good practice in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils through seven "building blocks for success" by:

1. promoting an ethos of attainment for all pupils, rather than stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as a group with less potential to succeed.
2. having an individualised approach to addressing barriers to learning and emotional support, at an early stage, rather than providing access to generic support and focusing on pupils nearing their end-of-key-stage assessments.
3. focusing on high quality teaching first rather than on bolt-on strategies and activities outside school hours.
4. focusing on outcomes and progress for individual pupils rather than on providing general strategies.
5. deploying the best staff to support disadvantaged pupils; developing skills and roles of teachers and TAs rather than using additional staff who do not know the pupils well.
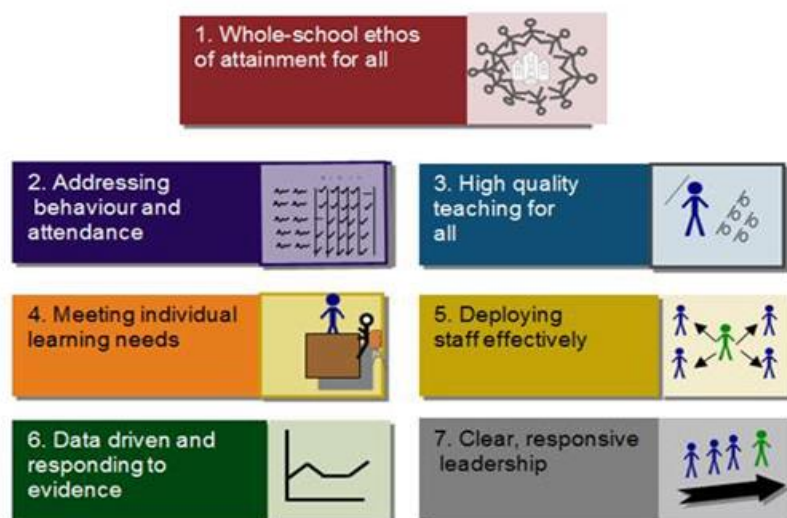
6. making decisions based on data and respond to evidence, using frequent, rather than one-off assessments and decision points.
7. having clear, responsive leadership: setting ever higher aspirations and devolving responsibility for raising attainment to all staff, rather than accepting low aspirations and variable performance.

Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils: articulating success and good practice (**NFER Supporting the attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils– November 2015**)

What is the most effective way to support disadvantaged pupils' achievement?

Based on interviews with senior leaders from more and less successful Primary, Secondary and Special schools, the NFER research found that schools which are more successful in promoting high attainment have a number of things in common. It identified these building blocks for success.

Building blocks for success

1. Whole-school ethos of attainment for all

2. Addressing behaviour and attendance

3. High quality teaching for all

4. Meeting individual learning needs

5. Deploying staff effectively

6. Data driven and responding to evidence

7. Clear, responsive leadership

Outcome based, effective use of resources

Since 2011, the Pupil Premium has added an additional resource to support the work of an inclusive school and to accelerate impact on achievement for disadvantaged learners. It offers the opportunity for leaders to find effective and innovative solutions to meet the needs of individual learners. To do this, leaders need accurate and timely data analysis and tracking systems which identify needs, monitor progress for individual learners and inform target setting for closing the attainment gap.

Effective schools prioritise consistent high quality teaching for all and disadvantaged learners benefit particularly in achieving their full potential when attendance, behaviour and emotional support are seen as integral to academic success. Effective teachers are able to draw on a wide range of evidence based approaches to meet the needs of all learners. This will include varied teaching methods and flexible groupings, development of metacognition skills and appropriately tailored interventions. Evidence from the Sutton Trust and Education Endowment Fund shows that significant improvement in narrowing the gap can be made when schools target funding towards:

- Improving feedback between teachers and learners
- Paired teaching
- Flexible small group teaching
- One to one tuition
- The teaching of independent learning strategies
- Peer mentoring and assessment
- Active encouragement of parental involvement in learning

An Ofsted review of the effectiveness of Pupil Premium spending in 2013 also concluded that successful schools:

"ring fenced funding for the target group of pupils and did not confuse eligibility for pupil premium with low ability…identified which pupils were underachieving, particularly in English and mathematics and drew on research evidence (such as the [Sutton Trust EEF Toolkit](#)) to allocate funding for activities most likely to have an impact on improving achievement"

How we use our resources to support and improve the attainment of vulnerable pupils is also essential to good educational achievement. This requires evidence of demographic need as well as evidence of "what works". The local authority can assist in ensuring we provide this information to support and review the use of resources. We will also articulate how the various strategies and support pathways work together so that there is not duplication and confusion of additional provision.

The Pupil Premium – The National Context

There have been two recent national reviews on the impact of funding for vulnerable learners. These reports attempt to evidence the impact of this additional resource and explain these findings in relation to learner outcomes. Some of the key findings are given below.

House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts - [Funding for disadvantaged pupils - September 2015](#)

Since the introduction of the Pupil Premium in 2011, there is some evidence that the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has started to narrow. Headteachers have increased their focus on tackling this obdurate issue and there are many examples of schools using the Pupil Premium on interventions that work.

Approximately 2 million (29%) children aged between 4 and 16 (of the 7 million children in publicly-funded schools in England) come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Such pupils tend to perform poorly in public examinations relative to other pupils. As poor academic performance is associated with lower wages and higher unemployment in adulthood, this 'attainment gap' for disadvantaged pupils is a key way in which poverty is transmitted from one generation to the next. Between 2011 and the end of 2015, the Department had distributed £6.0 billion of Pupil Premium funding to

schools. Since the introduction of the Pupil Premium, the attainment gap has closed overall by 4.7 percentage points in Primary schools and by 1.6 percentage points in Secondary schools.

Schools have demonstrated the potential of the Pupil Premium, but it is not yet a success in every school. The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed since 2011 at both Primary and Secondary school level in Kent, but the gap remains large and progress has been uneven across the county.

Too few schools have undertaken Pupil Premium Reviews, recommended by the DFE for schools that are not using the funding well. In order to support these reviews, it is important that schools who are effectively using the pupil premium, share their best practice.

Some children from disadvantaged backgrounds are starting school under-prepared and developing more slowly than their peers. Evidence shows that there may be more that can be done to tackle the impact of deprivation on a child's progress in the years before starting school. It will be important to monitor the impact of spending on the Early Years Pupil Premium, introduced in 2014-2015, worth up to £300 per child.

The Education Endowment Foundation reported to the Public Accounts Committee that research shows family engagement and family motivation is highly correlated with attainment at school. The National Audit Office similarly found that 91% of school leaders saw parental engagement as a barrier to closing the attainment gap of some disadvantaged pupils. However, only 57% of these leaders had an intervention in place to address this concern.

Some 64% of school leaders were now aware of and using the Foundation's toolkit to inform decisions about Pupil Premium funding. Many schools are found not to be using the Education Endowment Foundation's evidence toolkit effectively, for example not changing the way they use teaching assistants to help disadvantaged pupils in line with the Foundation's recommendations.

The Pupil Premium: Next Steps, Sutton Trust and Education Endowment Foundation, Report and Summit (July 2015) – Funding for disadvantaged pupils - September 2015

At a recent summit, The Sutton Trust and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)discussed the future of the Pupil Premium bringing together policy-makers, academics and the teaching profession to discuss how best to improve attainment for disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers. The summit meeting considered a new report Pupil Premium: Next Steps which includes new polling on the use of the Pupil Premium, its impact and the methods used by schools to decide how to spend the funding, as well as a number of short essays written by some of the summit participants.

How are schools responding to the pupil premium?

The number of school leaders who said they consider research evidence before taking spending decisions on the pupil premium has increased from 52% in 2012 to 64%. Many learn from what works in other schools (62%) and most are using past experience before deciding what approaches and programmes to adopt. Almost half of Secondary school leaders (48%) and a third (32%) of

Primary school leaders also say they make use of the [Sutton Trust/EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit](). The table below, taken from the report shows the main approaches schools' take.

How does your school decide which approaches and programmes to adopt to improve pupil learning?
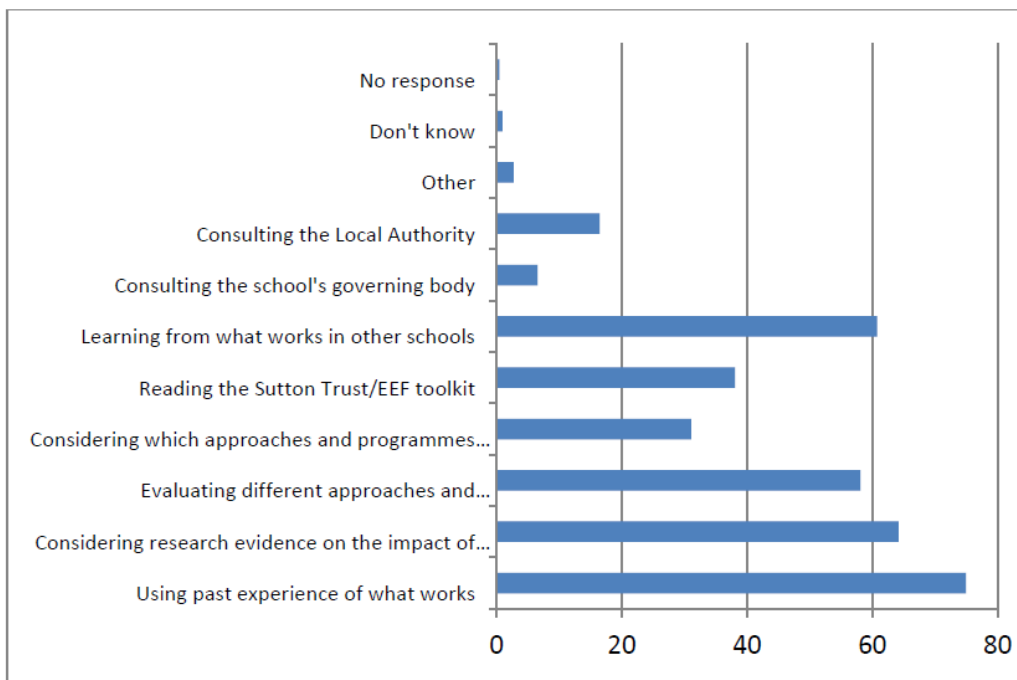
The Sutton Trust report notes that relatively few schools choose what it considers some of the "best low cost proven approaches" like improving feedback between teachers and pupils (4%) and peer-to-peer tutoring (1%).

Both of these national reports clearly show further work is required to demonstrate the significant impact of Pupil Premium funding on reducing attainment gaps. Attainment gaps are an important measure of impact and new approaches will also be used including improved attendance, raised aspirations and improved destinations at ages 16 – 18.

How are Early Years and Childcare Settings Responding to the Early Years Pupil Premium?

The Early Years Pupil Premium introduced in April 2015 provides extra funding for three and four year old children whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits or who have been in care or adopted from care. It complements the government funded Early Education Entitlement by providing pre-schools, nurseries, schools and other providers with up to an additional £300 per year for each eligible child. The government has committed £50m to fund the Early Years Pupil Premium in 2015/16 and estimates that 170,000 children will receive it (approximately 13% of all three and four year olds).

The national advice and support offered through the Education Endowment Foundation has been extended to include ideas for the use of the Early Years Pupil Premium, however the impact of the interventions has yet to be fully evidenced.

Early Years settings in Kent are using the funding in a wide variety of ways including providing extra staffing, speech and language interventions, additional resources and activities as well as organising targeted training for staff. Their ideas are shared across the county on the KELSI website and more locally through Early Years collaborations. The impact of the interventions is monitored through individual child and group tracking processes. Practitioners are encouraged to show how the funding is having a positive effect on individual children's progress and attainment, on narrowing achievement gaps, school readiness and early identification of additional learning needs.

As with school aged children the success of the funding will depend on the degree to which it is spent effectively. This could mean settings working together more to maximise impact and build capacity, and the sustained effort by the Department for Education, OFSTED and others to make a genuine improvement in the progress and attainment of disadvantaged children, with appropriate accountability.

Resources for Vulnerable Learner Support in Kent

Significant resources are allocated to support vulnerable learners across the county. **184 million** is allocated directly to schools and colleges and a further **20.1 million** is used to deliver early interventions and specialist support services. This is a significant resource and underpinning this strategy is the ambition of achieving greater impact by challenging the way resources are used in schools, collaborations and partnerships, to achieve more. There is a need to develop new ways of working with vulnerable learners that are more effective in significantly narrowing gaps and reducing NEETS. We aim to develop other indicators of impact alongside the attainment gap to ensure that the resources available achieve maximum impact. These new indicators will be included in the new district vulnerable learner data sets.

Funding for vulnerable learners for 2015-16 is given below.

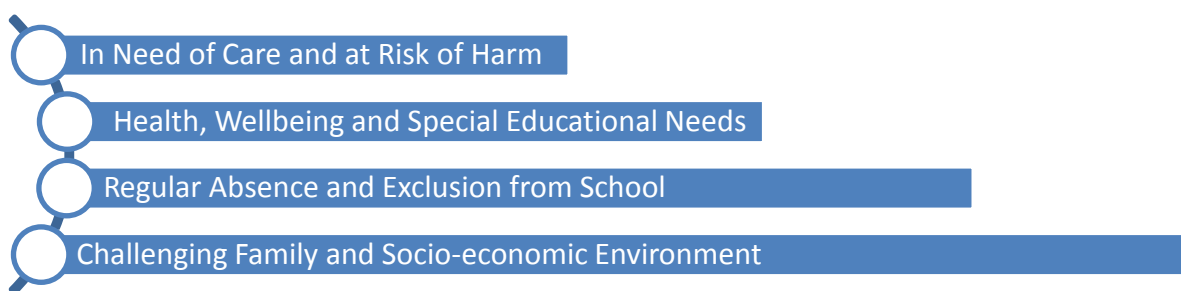|	Funding Allocations in Schools £'m	Local Authority Support Services £'m
High Needs Funding		
Special Schools	66.4	
Resourced SEN Provision (Units)	15.3	
Support for high needs pupils in Mainstream schools	13.9	
Support for high needs pupils in FE Colleges	3	
Support for high needs pupils in Independent Specialist Provision (post 16)	4	
Support for high needs pupils in Independent and Non-Maintained schools	22.5	
Support for high needs pupils in Maintained schools in OLAs	1.8	
Total	**126.9**	
Pupil Referral Units / Alternative Provision		14.8
Pupil Premium		
Free School Meals	53.3	
Looked After Children (supported by VSK)	2.7	
Post LAC (Adoption)	1.4	
Service Children	0.5	
Total	**57.9**	
STLS and LIFT		5.3
Early Help and Preventative Services		37.0
Total Spent by the LA on Vulnerable Learners	**241.9**	

Defining vulnerable learners

For the purposes of developing this strategy vulnerable learners have been defined as all groups who are at greater risk of poorer educational outcomes either through life circumstances or events that occur in a child's life which can affect their educational outcomes, including:

- Children in Care and Children in Need
- Pupils who receive the Pupil Premium Grant
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Children who qualify for a free place as a two year old and for the Early Years Pupil Premium at age three and four
- Young Carers
- Young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- Pupils missing education through prolonged or persistent absence and those excluded from school
- Pupils at risk of sexual exploitation
- Pupils with mental health issues
- Pupils from disproportionately affected ethnic minority groups

This is not an exhaustive list, but these groups tend to be the most significant in Kent. While it is acknowledged that not all children and young people start from the same points, other factors in some children's lives such as poverty and family circumstances can have a significant limiting effect on their achievement and attainment and longer term life chances.

Interrogation of the Kent data enables indicators of multiple deprivation for vulnerable learners to be categorised into 4 broad groups.

- In Need of Care and at Risk of Harm
- Health, Wellbeing and Special Educational Needs
- Regular Absence and Exclusion from School
- Challenging Family and Socio-economic Environment

These categories can often overlap and potentially impact on one another. For this reason, vulnerable learners need to be able to access support that crosses the traditional boundaries of the agencies that work with them. The most prominent overlapping factor which links the groups of vulnerable learners together and, arguably, is the best indicator of a vulnerable learner is those pupils affected by challenging family and socio-economic environments.
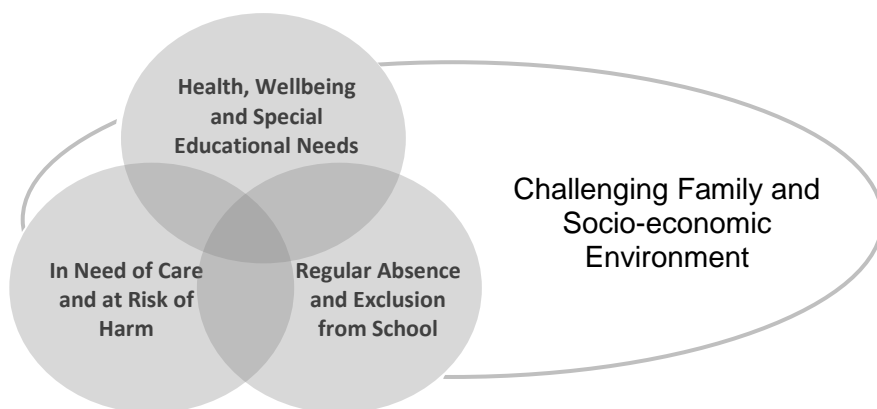
A statistical indicator of pupils living in a challenging family and socio-economic environment in Kent is pupils living in communities with a higher than average level of deprivation and pupils eligible for Free School Meals. Data shows that pupils from this group are more likely to:

- achieve poorer rates of progress and development at the Early Years Foundation Stage
- have Specialist Children's Services involvement
- be persistently absent or excluded from school
- be supported by the Troubled Families programme
- engage in offending and anti-social behavior
- not achieve the expected standards at age 11
- not achieve 5 or more A* - C GCSEs (including English and Math)
- have poorer post 16 and 18 destinations
- become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)

The experience of a single disadvantage can create difficulties for pupils and multiple disadvantages can often interact and exacerbate one another, leading to more harmful and costly outcomes for the pupil, the family, the school and society as a whole. The most vulnerable learners are those that span more than one of the 4 categories. Our Kent data suggests that a quarter of pupils are affected by challenging family and socio-economic environments, and there are close to 1,000 pupils who span all four categories.

There is a statistical correlation between pupils living in challenging family and socio-economic environments and poor outcomes. We use pupils living in communities with a higher than average level of deprivation (Mosaic groups L, M, N and O) and pupils eligible for Free School Meals as the indicator for vulnerable learners throughout this strategy and accompanying implementation plans.

Research shows that successfully attaining GCSEs (five or more A*-C grades) is strongly associated with higher levels of life satisfaction among young people. A UK study published by the Department for Education (DfE) found that pupil wellbeing predicted their later academic progression and engagement in school. For example, pupils with better emotional wellbeing at age seven had a value-added Key Stage 2 score 2.46 points higher (equivalent to more than one term's progress) than pupils with poorer emotional wellbeing. Pupils with better attention skills also make more progress across the four key stages. For example, pupils with no attention problems at age 13 had a total value-added GCSE score that was equivalent to more than one extra GCSE at grade A*.

Kent has a known population of approximately 3,500 Young Carers at any one time. Many Young Carers come from hidden and marginalised groups, including children caring for family members with mental illness or a substance dependency. Estimates in Kent suggest that the real number of Young Carers could be in excess of 10,000. The Children's Society report (Hidden from View – the experiences of young carers in England, 2013) reported that around one in 20 misses a significant amount of school because of their caring responsibilities. Young Carers have significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers e.g. the difference between nine B's and nine C's. Young carers are more likely than the national average to be NEET between the ages of 16 and 19.

Supporting Vulnerable Learners in Kent

Education and Young People's Services Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2015-18

There are a number of Kent strategies which set out our approaches to supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Kent's Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2019-19 states:

> *Central to our ambition is the desire to create the conditions in which pupils experience the best learning and teaching, and where pupils' social, moral and intellectual development and confidence can flourish. We want every child in Kent to achieve well above expectations and not to be held back by their social background. We want every young person to benefit from a broad range of pathways to further learning and employment, for their own achievement and for the success of the Kent economy. We want to ensure that vulnerable children and families have their needs met early so that they do not experience the level of challenge and difficulty in their lives that requires statutory interventions. They should have the same opportunities as all other children and families to flourish, to stay safe and well and succeed in the education system.*
>
> *Ensuring the most vulnerable learners experience success is one of our top priorities. Children in care, young offenders, excluded pupils, learners with special educational needs and disabilities and children from families on low incomes all experience significant barriers to their achievement and attain less well than their peers. We want to close the attainment gaps that exist as a barrier to their future success.*

To deliver this ambition it is recognized that further work, new approaches and systems are required across Kent, if there is going to be a significant improvement in narrowing gaps and improving life chances for vulnerable children and young people. This strategy builds on a range of successful strategies, plans and activities already in place, which include:

- Refresh of the Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2015 – 18 Available here
- Adult Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy Available here
- Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2014 – 2017 Available here
- Kent's Strategy for School Improvement Available here
- Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2013 – 16 Available here
- Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent 2013 – 2018 Available here
- Early Help and Preventative Services Strategy and Three Year Plan 2015 Available here
- Pupil Referral Unit and Alternative Provision Prospectus Available here
- Education and Young People's Services NEET Strategy and Action Plan 2015 – 16 Available here
- KCC Policy on Supporting Children and Young People with Medical Conditions including Mental Health Needs Available Here
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015 Available here

What works for vulnerable learners – turning the curve

The Kent Vulnerable Learner Strategy is intended to build on existing policies and good practice that are already place, but calls for a step change in activities and a review of some of our approaches. Better outcomes will be delivered by developing new strategies in greater depth and approaches that individualise interventions.

Six over-arching priorities continue to be a fundamental part of ensuring we are all focusing on those actions that make a difference:

1. Developing **aspirational cultures** and a growth mindset in schools which set high aspirations for all and allow all learners to make good progress and reach their full potential

2. Developing **individual and more personalised learning pathways** supported by approaches that address emotional well-being and barriers to learning.

3. Ensuring **parental engagement and involvement** - improving outcomes for vulnerable learners by supporting parents to be more involved in their children's learning and progress, with high aspirations for the future.

4. Promoting effective **school leadership and teaching and learning** so that we see increased capacity in early years settings, schools and post 16 providers for sustained educational improvement for vulnerable learners, especially in English and Mathematics.

5. Working in **collaboration across all partnerships** to ensure that transitions are supported and that improving outcomes for vulnerable learners is given the highest priority across all KCC services, schools and other education settings. A key aspect of this is to focus on coordinating district activities and collaborations to target and align resources to show greater impact.

6. Encouraging the use of **outcome based planning and evidence based use of resources** through widely available data and research, for example by providing district vulnerable learner data sets to identify vulnerable groups that require targeted interventions and which help to monitor progress.

1. Changing Cultures - The relentless ambition to succeed

'exceptional schools can make up for grave disadvantages faced by young people… Economic disadvantage in itself is not an insurmountable barrier to educational success… Some schools with high proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals do very well for this group, while others in the same geographical location do not." (HMCI)

Despite significant research into the range of vulnerable learner strategies adopted by schools and the use of the Pupil Premium, it is clear that there is no one single intervention that has led to success. Furthermore, schools need to develop a number of bespoke measures tailored to each school's circumstance. The DfE research report published in November 2015, [Supporting Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Articulating Success and Good Practice](), found that schools have used a large number of strategies to raise the attainment of disadvantaged learners since 2011.

Also more effective schools appeared to be adapting their strategies with greater attention to detail over a sustained period of time.

The most effective and ambitious schools are those that are open to outside influences, welcome challenge, are reflective and self- evaluative, are keen to share their good practices with others, work collaboratively to support, and benefit from, the work of other schools and agencies and are actively seeking to learn from best practice elsewhere. New Kent case studies of whole school approaches to supporting vulnerable learners will be developed and then regularly updated and will be available on the [KELSI]() website in the summer.

Schools have a critical community leadership role and can have a significant impact on the community's development and sometimes regeneration of a local area in securing outcomes for this and future generations of children, young people and their families. Changing learners' mind-sets about their own ability and the value of education itself is crucial to improving outcomes for vulnerable learners. This includes setting a new cultural standard, giving opportunities for new ways of behaving and building new relationships between the school and the community, especially with local employers.

We aim to see more focused activity across all key stages in Kent Coastal communities, in particular, where there are the widest gaps in achievement and the greatest number of vulnerable groups not reaching their full potential. This will include more concerted effort to address low self-esteem and aspirations and poor employment prospects. A particular focus will need to be on improving the academic performance of boys from low socio economic groups and developing new careers and guidance systems in schools linked to employment and training opportunities, with the active engagement of employers .

2. Individual Learning Pathways and Support

In order to ensure that all learners succeed, learning programmes and activities need to be personalised and supported by an individualised approach to addressing barriers to learning and emotional support. This support needs to be constant throughout each school year not just at key transition points or leading up to end of key stage assessments.

Through this strategy (and the NEET strategy) we aim to increase 14 to 19 personalised pathways which lead to sustained employment or higher levels of learning. Many vulnerable learners face multiple barriers to progressing successfully to high quality learning or training pathways post 16, especially if they have not achieved good levels of progress and attainment in English and Maths. These barriers will only decrease if more personalised support, mentoring and better progression in technical and vocational pathways are developed for 14-19 year olds.

Too many vulnerable learners in Kent continue to leave school and colleges without qualifications and experiences that will give them employment options and opportunities. Many schools with large numbers of learners in receipt of Free School Meals are in areas with limited employment opportunities particularly in the coastal communities. Many areas in Kent have lower incomes without access to higher-paid jobs. This isolates and disadvantages these groups further from the expectations and experiences that financial security brings. Schools can reduce the impact of this by subsidising a range of experiences that demonstrate that better jobs and economic situations are available further afield, and are linked to attainment and progression to suitable post 16 learning and qualifications.

The new Kent **E learning platform** will provided a range of opportunities and teaching resources to support vulnerable learners which will complement learning programmes in schools. There will be specific virtual live and recorded lessons for vulnerable learner groups, English and Maths, catch up programmes, revision, and extra support opportunities plus new resources, Careers Advice and guidance.

The new **Emotional Health and Well-being Strategy** will ensure increased access to CAMHS support in schools and in community settings. A new emphasis will be in early identification through whole school approaches to understanding emotional wellbeing and mental health. Additionally, new CAMHS provision integrated with Early Help Units will work with children and families and those young people with eating disorders, anxiety and depression, self-harming behaviour, OCD, ADS, and conduct disorder, who have traditionally not engaged with services and need an assertive outreach approach of intervention.

This service will also work with young people with problematic sexualised behaviour, post-traumatic stress disorder and will liaise with adult services where an adolescent's parent has a mental health issue and there is a need for better social support for the family.

The new service will work closely with the Core CAMHS provision and where required will ensure effective and timely pathways across all provision to manage levels of need. Any existing therapeutic or supportive relationship between professionals and families will always be considered alongside levels of emotional needs and safeguarding when determining which service will undertake work and hold the accountability for the child or young person.

The new Kent **Health Needs Education Service** provides individual learning pathways and support for those learners who are unable to access mainstream education due to a mental or physical health need. The Service focuses on supporting the home and schools with engagement strategies and the reintegration of the learners back into these schools in a timely fashion. Support provided includes access to local hubs, off site tuition and E Learning platforms.

3. Parental Engagement and Involvement

Early Help and Preventative Services will develop new parenting programmes promoting strategies for early reading, reading for life and parental involvement in homework. The opportunities for increasing the involvement of parents and carers in Children's Centres and Youth Hubs are significant and all workers have a responsibility to ensure wide involvement that is linked to promoting parents' understanding of the importance of their involvement in their children's educational achievement and its importance for future well-being in adulthood.

Within Early Help and Preventative Services parenting programmes and family work will have a rigorous focus on school attendance and educational attainment. Support often remains very much on the individual child or young person as opposed to their whole family and environment. Through work with the whole family, parents, carers and wider families will be involved in decision making and will be encouraged to be actively involved in children and young people's education.

Where parents are not supporting positive behaviour and learning, whether it be through more formal attendance or youth justice work, we will consider the use of Parenting Orders. We will make better use of these strategies to ensure parental responsibility and ensure that workers are able to effectively challenge and support families. Workforce development plans aim to ensure all Early Help and Preventative Service staff are trained and confident to work with parents with a whole family approach. We will also develop appropriate information for parents, families and others, ensuring effective take-up of the services offered.

There will be an increased focus on developing new strategies to improve outcomes in English and Maths across all Key Stages. New opportunities lead by Community Learning and Skills working alongside schools, Early Years settings and Children's Centres will be developed to support family engagement in literacy and numeracy programmes. They will also provide more opportunities for 16-18 year olds to achieve qualifications in English and maths.

This will build on CLS's Family Learning approach which successfully engages families through a range of practical, enjoyable courses from informal workshops on a variety of interest-based topics to more focused and extended courses in which parents develop their own English and maths skills. As they engage in these activities they learn more about how these topics are delivered in schools and Early Years settings and how they can better help their children with these skills.

All courses are targeted for families where adults have few formal qualifications and have not had a positive experience of learning themselves.   There is a particular focus on communities with poor socio-economic circumstances across the County including "pocket deprivation" - those surrounded by areas of higher affluence - and those affected by additional disadvantage.

Courses are designed to be welcoming and inclusive, focusing on the positive skills that parents bring with them, rather than focusing on skill deficits.   Whatever their personal circumstances, the main reason parents give for taking part to support their children and courses build on that enthusiasm. Many courses involve parents and children working together and this active participation can greatly improve how adults and children see the value of education.

As parents grow more confident in their ability to learn, content may be included which focuses on parents' own maths and English skills. Skilled tutors continuously adjust learning plans to follow learners' interests, maximising immediate and longer term outcomes.

Close working partnerships with schools, Children's Centres and Early Years settings are crucial to shape an appropriate offer and encourage the most vulnerable families to take part and sustain commitment.

CLS Family Programmes engage with families so that there is improvement in parental confidence, relationships with schools and settings and in their ability to help their children with homework. Children's attitudes and behaviour also improve and there is feedback that children's school work improves.   Parents themselves report greater confidence in their own learning skills and in broader outcomes such as working positively with professional agencies.   These responses reflect national findings and it will be a key element to develop and monitor the specific impact of Family Programmes for vulnerable adult and child learners.
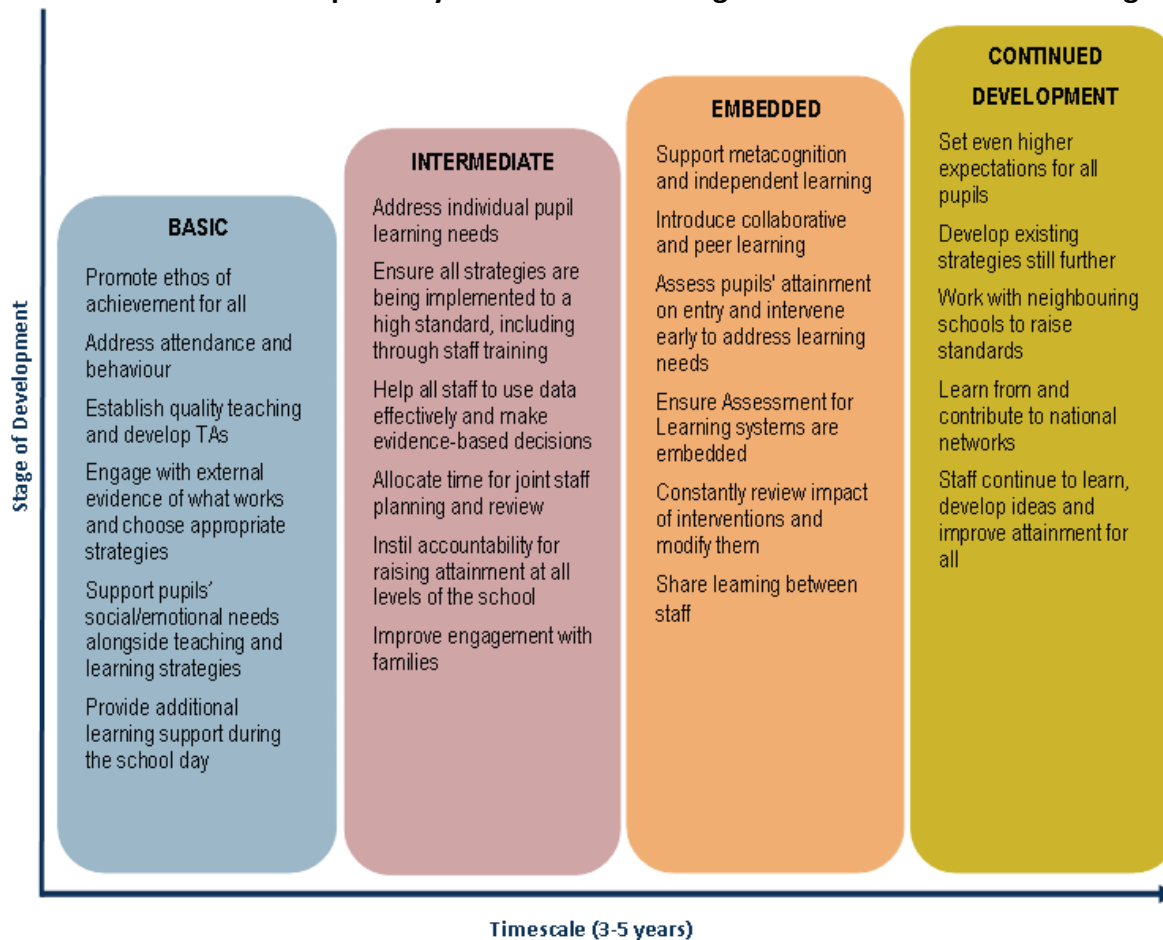
4. Leadership, Teaching and Learning

Highly effective Early Years and School leaders set high aspirations, devolve responsibility for raising achievement to all staff, and ensure the quality teaching is seen as a priority and teachers see every learner as an individual. One of the key lessons from research about closing achievement gaps is to build on high quality teaching for all learners, rather than focus on other one off activities and events outside school hours. Evidence from the Sutton Trust, Education Endowment fund and DFE report show that significant improvement can be made in narrowing the gap by:

- Improving feedback between teachers and learners
- Paired teaching
- Small group teaching
- One to one tuition
- Independent learning strategies
- Peer mentoring
- Parental involvement

The model below taken from the DFE report shows how these teaching strategies are used in conjunction with other whole school activities. The stages of development used in this model are useful in supporting schools to evaluate their own priorities and school improvement plans.

An illustration of schools' pathways to success in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils

BASIC
- Promote ethos of achievement for all
- Address attendance and behaviour
- Establish quality teaching and develop TAs
- Engage with external evidence of what works and choose appropriate strategies
- Support pupils' social/emotional needs alongside teaching and learning strategies
- Provide additional learning support during the school day

INTERMEDIATE
- Address individual pupil learning needs
- Ensure all strategies are being implemented to a high standard, including through staff training
- Help all staff to use data effectively and make evidence-based decisions
- Allocate time for joint staff planning and review
- Instil accountability for raising attainment at all levels of the school
- Improve engagement with families

EMBEDDED
- Support metacognition and independent learning
- Introduce collaborative and peer learning
- Assess pupils' attainment on entry and intervene early to address learning needs
- Ensure Assessment for Learning systems are embedded
- Constantly review impact of interventions and modify them
- Share learning between staff

CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT
- Set even higher expectations for all pupils
- Develop existing strategies still further
- Work with neighbouring schools to raise standards
- Learn from and contribute to national networks
- Staff continue to learn, develop ideas and improve attainment for all

Stage of Development

Timescale (3-5 years)

This model suggests that there are certain basics (especially addressing attendance and behaviour and ensuring a supportive school ethos) that need to be in place, before moving on to more specific improvement strategies. Schools at an intermediate stage have taken several of the actions associated with more successful practice, but these have yet to become embedded in their systems and practice. This takes place at the third stage, where schools are able to focus more strongly on early intervention. Metacognition and independent learning, collaboration and peer learning are placed at this stage, as the findings of this study suggest that these are associated with schools at a later stage in the improvement journey. At the final stage, schools are in a position to continually seek opportunities for improvement, contribute to local and national networks and share their learning with other schools.[1]

5. Promoting Collaborations

'.....one of the most powerful ways of achieving improvement is through collaboration, with the best schools, settings and leaders supporting those that are more challenged. But it's not just the school or centre receiving support that improves – providing support gives even the most accomplished teachers and leaders an opportunity to gain new ideas and improve their own practice.' (DfE,2012)

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[1] Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils: articulating success and good practice

There have been a range of successful collaborations between Kent schools and there is a need to focus elements of this work on achieving better outcomes for disadvantaged groups. Nearly 500 schools are working as part of a collaboration or partnership. There is a growing understanding from research that the best guidance for raising standards for disadvantaged learners is to facilitate schools learning from others' good practice. This will continue to be the impetus for developing collaboration between schools in Kent and will underpin the success of this strategy.

Additionally, over 400 of Kent's 700 Early Years and Childcare providers in the private, voluntary and independent sectors are now working as part of a formal collaboration. The key purpose of these collaborations is to drive a faster rate of improvement and narrow gaps in achievement.

We aim to develop more effective district collaborations, optimising the use of experiences and resources between schools and KCC services to narrow achievement gaps for vulnerable learners. There will be more focused and coordinated work in the districts through Early Help units, LIFTs, In Year Fair Access Panels and 14-19 Participation and Progression Meetings to ensure that particular vulnerable groups have appropriate support to enable them to succeed in learning.

The Early Help and Preventative Service Units and Children's Centres in the districts will continue to work with schools to minimise the barriers that vulnerable learners face. Early Help teams will work with schools to support early interventions and provide more specialist family support.

The devolved PRU model will be developed further to support learners at risk of exclusion and will have a specific focus on developing new approaches to reducing Primary school exclusions. The new Health Needs Education Service will also provide additional support to schools for learners with mental health needs, alongside the Headstart programme and CAMHs. We will coordinate this work across the districts to maximise the impact and outcomes for learners.

6. Evidence based planning and use of resources – data and research

It is sometimes said that 'schools cannot do it alone', but this is not quite true: exceptional schools can make up for grave disadvantages faced by young people… Economic disadvantage in itself is not an insurmountable barrier to educational success… Some schools with high proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals do very well for this group, while others in the same geographical location do not." (HMCI)

 A new vulnerable learners district data set will be developed and will include other indicators of impact alongside the attainment gap data. The data will help schools to monitor pupil progress more comprehensively and to monitor the progress of specific strategies, so that schools respond quickly if the strategies for supporting vulnerable groups are not having sufficient impact. This data will also be used to review and evaluate the impact of resources that are used to support vulnerable learners in schools, KCC services and other partners.

Priorities for Action

1. The first strategy is to support schools, and collaborations between schools, to do the core business well, which means ensuring all teaching is good, and teachers improve by working closely with other teachers and learn from the best practice. The test of good teaching is the achievement of expected, and better than expected, rates of progress for all pupils and too much variation in the progress rates for different groups of pupils would suggest the need to re-think teaching approaches.

2. Promote school cultures that support teacher development, improvement and professional learning, where coaching and collaboration are given more priority than compliance activity and where, for example, monitoring activities provide teachers with solutions and ideas for achieving a better outcome.

3. Encourage schools to avoid in-school social segregation and grouping arrangements that hinder better engagement by vulnerable groups, reduce levels of motivation and engender less positive attitudes by learners, especially those that are likely to experience disadvantage. Social segregation, characterised for example by rigid ability and attainment grouping with little fluidity for learners, a hierarchy of subjects or curriculum opportunities and differences in access to the best teaching, limits opportunity and has a detrimental impact on engagement and resilience.

4. Support schools to pay more attention to character education, that is, focusing on developing children's and young people's attitudes and aptitudes, to improve well being, resilience, self-motivated learning, perseverance and ambition. This will be aided by rolling out the Headstart resilience programmes across Kent schools.

5. Promote greater engagement by vulnerable learners in enrichment activities that help to develop confidence and resilience. These activities, (including sports and outward bound, the performing arts, music lessons, after school clubs and trips) are taken for granted by many children, but more effort is needed to ensure pupils on free school meals participate in them and get the benefits. Sometimes this will cost money for individual children and should be supported by the Pupil Premium.   These opportunities help to develop social and cultural capital, confidence, self-control and self-belief, which research tells us are as important or maybe more important than cognitive ability for success in education and in the labour market.

6. Focus on the basic pre-requisites for learning. Ensuring pupils attend school regularly, are prepared for learning with the right equipment, and do not miss learning time because they are excluded from class or from the school makes a big difference.   When absence and

exclusion feature strongly for some individuals, schools that provide additional support to catch up are less likely to see gaps widen or children fall further behind.

7. Promote a growth culture or mindset in schools which drives the belief that all children can do better than expected, that their innate abilities and aptitudes can be improved with the right support, and that promotes school practice that does not give up on any child. This is more likely to get the engagement and effort by all children to do well.

8. Support all schools to make the best use of Pupil Premium funding by consistent use of the Sutton Trust's evidence papers, including the most effective and low cost strategies in their Teaching and Learning Toolkit. These are not used as widely and consistently as they could be by schools to narrow achievement gaps. These proven strategies include the regular use of helpful feedback to pupils, peer mentoring and peer assessment, the use of meta-cognition which encourages pupils to reflect on and develop their learning techniques and habits, and the development of mastery learning (which involves regular practice) and the use of coaching for children and staff. A recent report by The Sutton Trust concluded that while more than 60% of schools had accessed and knew about the Toolkit less than 10% of schools were using the strategies effectively.

9. Encourage schools to target their resources efficiently so that vulnerable learners receive additional good teaching as individuals and in small groups, in addition to whole class lessons. And encourage schools to give some children more help and time in school to do homework, because they cannot, or will not get the help to, do it at home. At a time when it is estimated that 50% of children are having extra tutoring outside school, it is not unreasonable to expect that disadvantaged children would need additional teaching and coaching. They are also likely to need the support of nurture groups to build relationships and attachment to learning.

10. KCC will continue to seek funding from the Schools Funding Forum or KAH to promote school collaborations and school to school support, as one of the best ways to support teacher development and spread the influences of the best practice in improving teaching and raising standards, including narrowing achievement gaps.

11. Encourage all schools to make good use of the devolved resources for special educational needs, including the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service, in District LIFTs (local inclusion forum teams) and support the coordination of this work by lead Special Schools and the executive groups of Headteachers. These are designed to provide support to schools to achieve better outcomes and narrow gaps for SEN pupils.

12. Ensure the allocated outreach funding to Special Schools in each District is based on levels of need and provides more bespoke training and advice to mainstream schools on more

specialist aspects of SEN, including autism, emotional and behavioural, and speech and language needs.

13. Ensure all schools make effective use of high needs funding, for pupils with special educational needs, to support earlier intervention and a more flexible approach to addressing pupils' additional learning needs.

14. Continue to develop the work of the Pupil Referral Units, including the Education Health Needs Service, and ensure the devolved or delegated funding to local management committees run by headteachers or to groups of schools that wished to collaborate on alternative provision rather than have a PRU, is used effectively to ensure fewer vulnerable learners are excluded and those in alternative provision achieve good outcomes and destinations.

15. Ensure the Early Help and Preventative Service, in working closely with schools, identifies the right vulnerable children for support and provides the right level of responsive and timely additional help for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people, and their families. This resource is expected to have an impact on improving outcomes for these pupils, on removing barriers to their learning and engagement and to narrowing achievement gaps.

16. Give more priority to, and target resources for, the support for resilience, mental health and emotional well being, in and out of school by re-commissioning CAMHS to work directly in schools and in Early Help units; by commissioning more mental health and emotional wellbeing support services through Early Help; by rolling out the Headstart resilience programmes across Kent schools; and by making effective use of the Education Health Needs Service.

17. Extend the access to, and range of, parenting support and parenting programmes, through Early Help's family work to support parent's involvement in their children's learning; through extending parenting programmes provided by Children's Centres to schools; by commissioning more parenting programmes for schools to purchase; and by extending Family Learning programmes to more schools. School leaders see parental engagement as a barrier to closing the attainment gap of some disadvantaged pupils but the Sutton Trust identified that only 57% of these leaders had an intervention in place to address this concern.

18. Support schools to undertake Pupil Premium Reviews, where gaps are not closing and where there may be a need to develop the effectiveness of the strategies supported by the funding. In order to support these reviews, we will support schools that are effectively using the pupil premium to share their best practice.

19. Support and monitor the impact of spending on the Early Years Pupil Premium, introduced in 2014-2015, worth up to £300 per child. The 2015 data demonstrates significant gaps in achievement between eligible children and others in communication, language and literacy. This means that too many vulnerable children are leaving the Early Years Foundation Stage below age-related expectations in key areas that underpin future achievement.

20. Develop a new District vulnerable learner data pack which includes other indicators of impact alongside the attainment gap to ensure that the resources available achieve maximum impact. The data pack should also include more information for schools using the Mosaic groups data L, M, N and O to indicate higher than average levels of deprivation to support identification of vulnerable learners facing multiple disadvantages.

21. Improve the coordination of services and activities at district level, to ensure support for vulnerable learners is well targeted and has maximum impact. This includes ensuring effective school engagement with, and links between, LIFT, Early Help, In Year Fair Access panels, PRUs and alternative provision, the Health Needs Education Service, use of high needs funding and outreach support by Special schools.

22. Develop and extend the use of the new Kent E learning platform which will provide a range of opportunities and teaching resources to support vulnerable learners and will complement learning programmes in schools. There will be specific virtual live and recorded lessons for vulnerable learner groups, English and Maths, catch up programmes, revision, and extra support opportunities plus new resources, and careers advice and guidance.

How will we know that the strategy is successful?

To ensure all vulnerable learners meet their full potential, working in close partnership with schools and Early Years settings, we aim to achieve the following by 2018:

- The FSM achievement gap in the EYFS will close to 8% by 2018.
- The FSM achievement gaps at Key Stages 2 and 4 will continue to reduce from the 2015 baseline, and be less than the national gap figures for pupils from low income backgrounds. In Key Stage 2 the gap for FSM will reduce to 8% by 2018. In Key Stage 4 the FSM gap will reduce to 23% by 2018.
- The actual levels of attainment and rates of progress for pupils supported by the Pupil Premium will improve further each year.
- The achievement gaps for Children in Care at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 will reduce to 25% and 37% respectively in 2018.
- The achievement gaps for SEN at Key Stage 2 and GCSE will reduce to 37% and 35% respectively by 2018, and actual levels of attainment and rates of progress will improve each year.
- We will reduce the number of KCC schools in an Ofsted category of concern year by year, so that by 2018 no schools will be in this category, and no vulnerable child will be in a failing school.
- There will be an increase in the number of good schools, with at least 90% of all schools judged as good or outstanding by 2018, so that fewer vulnerable learners will be attending schools requiring improvement.
- By 2018, 90% of Education, Health and Care plan (EHC) assessments will be completed within a reduced timescale of 20 weeks (from 26 weeks) and pupils with plans will be making good progress and achieve above average outcomes when compared with national benchmarks.
- By 2017, we aim to ensure there will be no more than 1% of young people aged 16-18 who are NEET.
- The number of NEETs coming from vulnerable groups will reduce to no more than 70 by 2018.
- The Level 3 achievement gap for young people from disadvantaged will be above the national average and the gap between this group and other students will have reduced to 16% by 2018.
- By 2018, the number of assisted employment opportunities for vulnerable learners with learning difficulties and disabilities will increase to 150.
- Re-offending by young people will reduce to 27% by summer 2018 and ensure at least 86% engage in full time education. At least 85% of young offenders aged 16 and 17 engage in learning or employment with training.

- The attendance of children and young people will improve by supporting the reduction of persistent absence to 1.2% in Primary and 4.3% in Secondary schools by 2018.
- By 2018, no children and young people in care will be excluded from school, fewer than 4% will be persistently absent and their attainment will improve year on year from the 2015 baseline and be above the national average. The achievement gaps at Key Stages 2 and 4 will be less than the national gaps.
- There will be fewer than 20 pupils permanently excluded from schools by 2018.
- By 2018, all young people attending a PRU will have achieved good qualifications at age 16 including English and mathematics, and will have a positive learning or training destination at ages 16 and 17
- By 2018, all Children Missing Education will be identified, tracked and monitored, and at least 85% of all new children referred who are found will be offered suitable education provision within 30 days
- There will be at least a 30% reduction in the numbers of children in need and those with a child protection plan, and at least 88% of children and families supported through the Early Help units will achieve a positive outcome.
- The Troubled Families Programme will ensure that high numbers of families are 'turned around', up to 7000 by 2019 out of the target cohort of 8,960 families.

The Kent Profile

In developing this strategy a number of key data sets on vulnerable learner outcomes have been interrogated across all Key Stages. This data clearly demonstrates the need to develop approaches to supporting vulnerable learners if outcomes are to significantly improve.

Deprivation and Free School Meals

Kent is ranked 102nd out of 152 county and unitary authorities in the English Indices of Deprivation, placing Kent within England's least deprived third of authorities. However, there are areas in Kent that are within the 20% most deprived wards in England, often coastal towns.

In Kent there are a quarter of a million school age pupils attending 585 schools, 24 Special schools and 11 Pupil Referral Units. 13.2% of pupils in Kent schools are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM); the national average is 16.3% as shown in the table below.
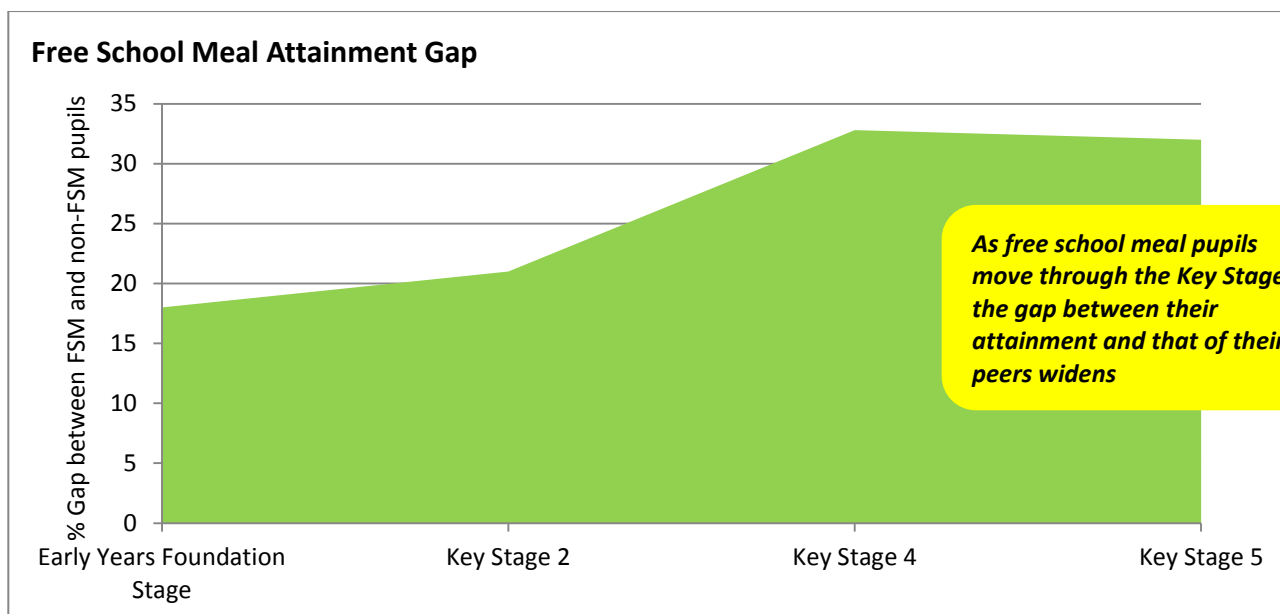
	Primary	Secondary	Special	Overall
National	17.0%	14.6%	37.2%	16,3%
Kent	13.7%	11.7%	33.7%	13.2%

The distribution of learners eligible for free school meals shows that 185 Kent schools have above national average numbers.

A breakdown of the distribution of FSM learners is given below:
- 47% of Kent schools have a pupil population of which less than 10% are eligible for FSM
- 22% of Kent schools have a pupil population of which less than 5% are eligible for FSM
- 16% of Kent schools have over a quarter of their pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Two thirds of Pupil Referral Units have over a third of their pupils who are eligible for FSM.
- 4.4% of Primary aged pupils eligible for FSM are supported by the Troubled Families programme, compared to 0.2% who are not eligible for FSMs.
- 14% of Secondary aged pupils who are eligible for FSM were persistently absent from school in 2013/14 academic year, compared to 2% who were not eligible for FSMs.
- 6.3% of Secondary aged pupils eligible for FSMs are supported by Specialist Children's Services as a Child in Need, compared to 1.1% of pupils not eligible for FSM.

The attainment gap, at different Key Stages for FSM learners, is highlighted in the Tables below. Narrowing the attainment gap for learners eligible for FSM continues to be a significant challenge for Kent. The gap is not narrowing sufficiently, particularly at KS5, and progress has been limited and uneven across the county for a number of years.

Free School Meal Attainment Gap

As free school meal pupils move through the Key Stages the gap between their attainment and that of their peers widens

Let us consider some of the challenges. In Kent a child or young person who is eligible for free school meals is likely to achieve less well than similar pupils nationally. Gaps are wider in Kent than the national average achievement gaps for the end of Primary and Secondary school at ages 11 and 16, and the situation does not improve by age 19. While standards of attainment continue to improve overall each year, with Key Stage 2 outcomes in line with the national average and GCSE outcomes above the national average, the outcomes for pupils on free school meals have shown limited improvement in the last two to three years.

In 2015:

- The percentage of FSM pupils in the **Early Years Foundation Stage** achieving a Good Level of Development improved to 60.1% compared to 57.6% in 2014. Overall 74% achieved a Good Level of Development. However, at the same time the achievement gap widened to 15%, compared to 2014 when the gap had narrowed to 12%.

- **At Key Stage 1,** the attainment of FSM pupils improved at Level 2B and above and at Level 3 across all subjects. These improvements reflect a three year upward trend, which is positive.

- **At Key Stage 2,** there were very small improvements in the gaps in attainment for FSM pupils. The level 4 attainment of FSM pupils in Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined improved from 65.5% in 2014 to 67.3% in 2015. Overall 80% of pupils achieved this outcome. The gap between these pupils and non FSM pupils reduced very slightly for the third successive year from 17.8% in 2014 to 17.6% in 2015. The national gap is 15%.

- **At Key Stage 4,** the attainment gap between FSM pupils and their peers for 5 or more A*- C grades at GCSE including English and Mathematics was 33.8%, compared to 34.3% in 2014. The national gap is 27%. Overall 57.3% of pupils in Kent achieved this outcome. While the gap narrowed slightly more FSM pupils achieved this GCSE benchmark, 30.6% compared to

26.5% in 2014, and compared to 63.5% of non FSM students. At the same time 46 Secondary schools reduced the FSM gap compared to 41 schools in 2014.

- **At A Level and Post 16,** the level 2 attainment gap for FSM students narrowed by 5 points to 20% in 2015 compared to 25% in 2014. While this is welcome improvement it is still above the latest available England gap of 17% and places Kent in the bottom quartile for the country.

- The level 3 attainment gap remained static at 32% for 2014 and 2015. This is above the latest available England average of 25% and places Kent in the second quartile for the country.

- The latest Learning Plus UK data set (November 2015) shows that FSM students attain on average 15 points fewer than non FSM students for each qualification type. Overall retention at post 16 for FSM students in Kent is 61% compared to a national rate of 68%. The overall retention rate is 88% in Kent, which is in line with the national rate.

At the same time pupils on free school meals are disproportionately represented in groups that require significant additional support. They are more likely, than other pupils, to:

- be excluded from school
- be taught in lower sets and streams
- spend more time with Teaching Assistants
- have poor attendance
- have special educational needs
- participate less in enrichment activities
- have less access to music lessons and school trips where cost is an issue
- attend schools that have greater challenges
- be involved in youth offending
- become NEET
- have more difficulty finding good employment
- have less chance of going to university.

While these trends exist, they are not pre-determined and it is vitally important that we do not make assumptions about, and have lower expectations for, children from poorer backgrounds. Children on free school meals are not a homogenous group. They are individuals and meeting their needs and realising their potential as individuals is what matters.

The tyranny of the average can apply, if we are not careful, and our expectations may go no higher than what we have come to expect for certain groups of learners. It is salutary to remember that children form advantaged backgrounds do better than expected in relation to their cognitive abilities and children from poorer backgrounds achieve worse than expected in relation to their
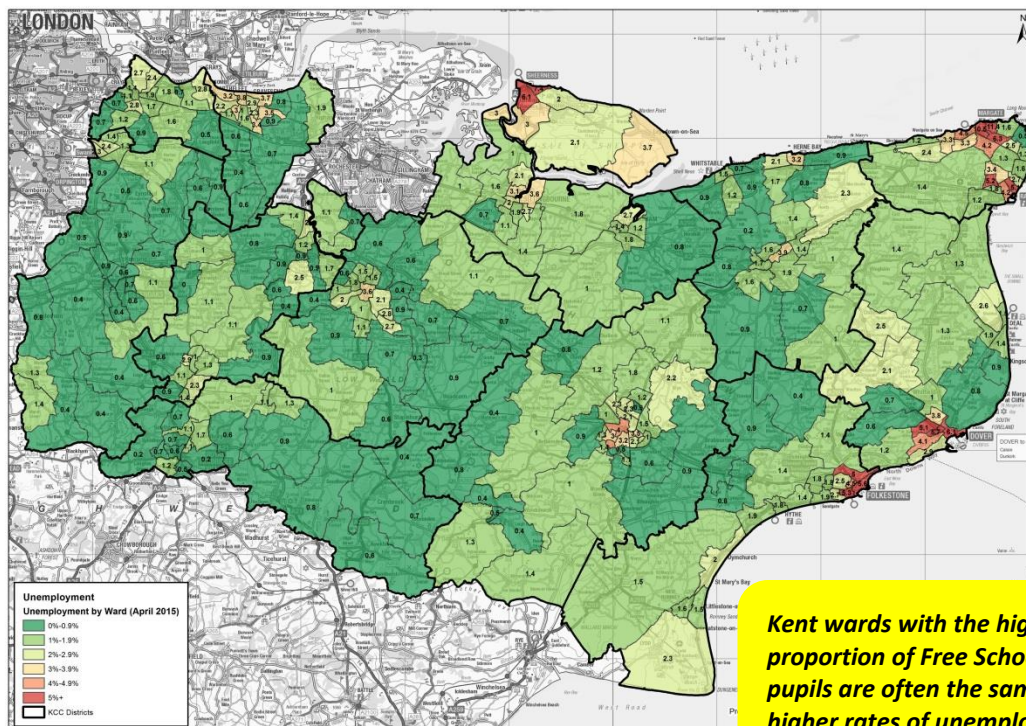
potential. Schools have to challenge these embedded expectations and schools that make the effort to have more individualised and personalised approaches are more likely to break the cycle of disadvantage.

The map below highlights communities across the county with a high prevalence of pupils eligible for FSMs. These communities have a higher prevalence of vulnerable learners.
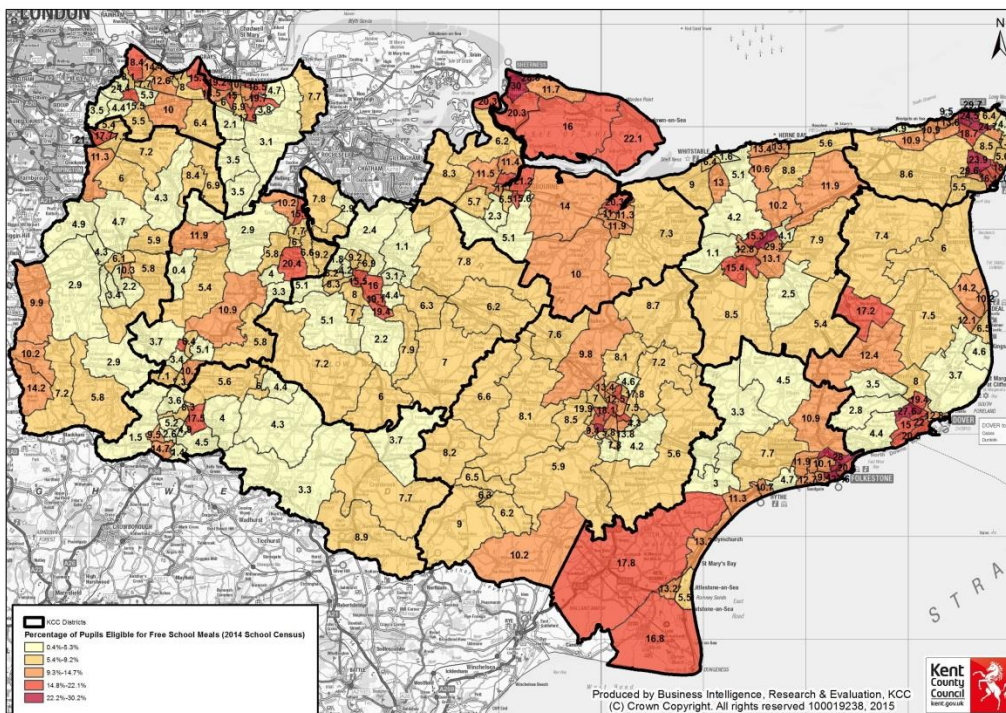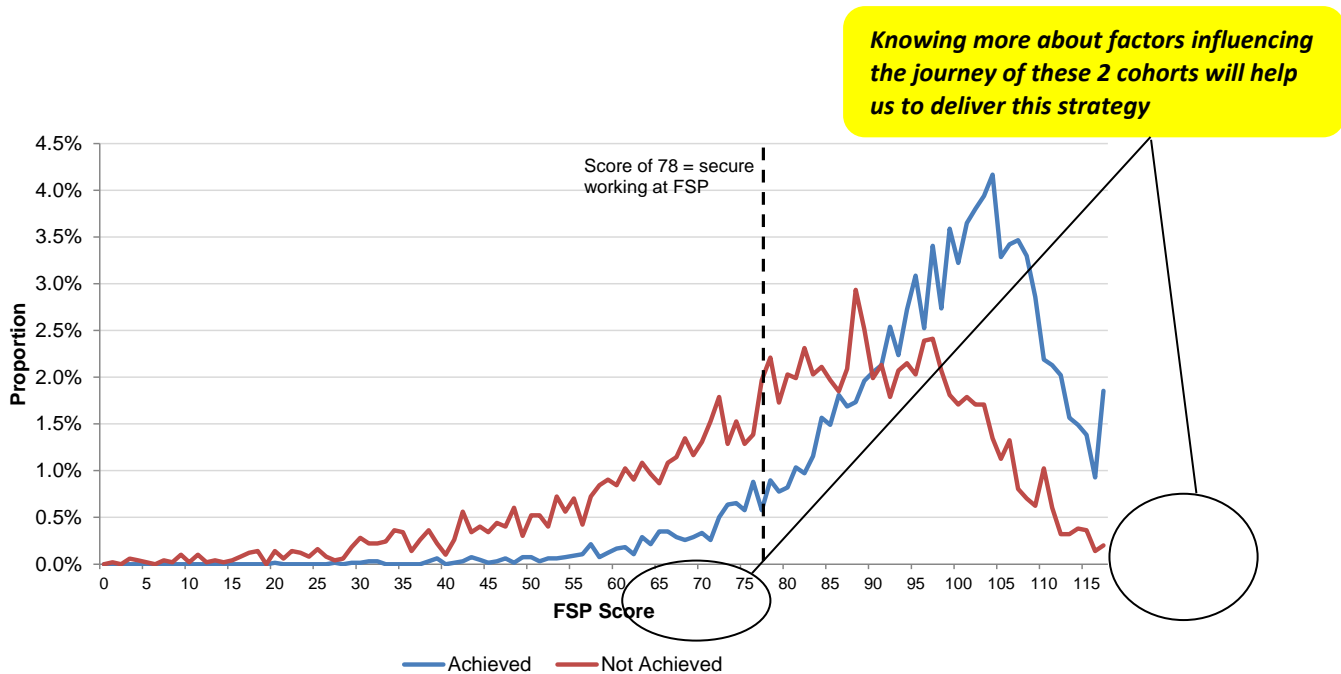

Ward data shows in more detail the correlation between communities with a higher propensity for vulnerable learners and other indices of deprivation. The map below shows the levels of unemployment across wards and the similarities to the FSM data, potentially showing a link between numbers of vulnerable learners, those entitled to FSM and aspirations for further education and work.

Free School Meals and Unemployment

Kent wards with the highest proportion of Free School Meal pupils are often the same wards with higher rates of unemployment

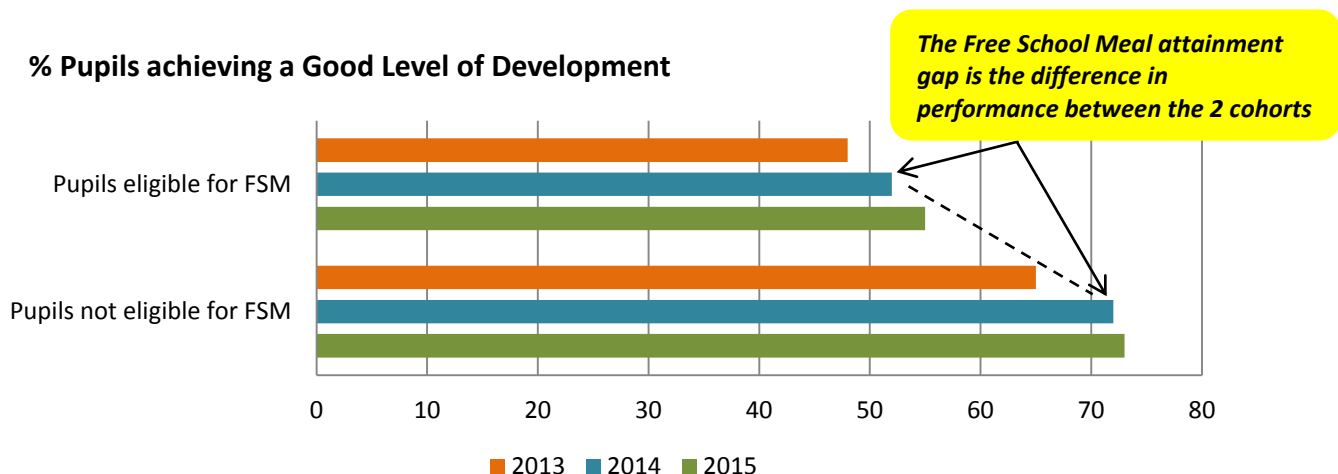Further investigation of the FSM population in Kent schools shows an increasingly complex picture.

The data identifies a correlation between progress and achievement at the Early Years Foundation Stage and GCSE suggesting that tomorrow's vulnerable learners at GCSE level are today's vulnerable learners at the Early Years Foundation Stage. The below chart shows the proportion of pupils by Foundation Stage score for both those that achieved five or more A*-C GCSEs and those that did not. It clearly shows that pupils who did not achieve five or more A*-C GCSEs scored on average lower in the Early Years Foundation Stage than those that achieve five or more A*-C GCSEs.

Knowing more about factors influencing the journey of these 2 cohorts will help us to deliver this strategy

Chart: Proportion vs FSP Score. Legend: Achieved, Not Achieved. Score of 78 = secure working at FSP

Early Years

The 2015 scorecard data shows that at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage there was a gap of 18% between FSM pupils and their peers. These outcomes do not provide a strong enough springboard for future success for vulnerable learners. The 2015 data demonstrates significant gaps in achievement between the two groups in communication, language and literacy. This means that too many vulnerable children are leaving the Early Years Foundation Stage below age-related expectations in key areas that underpin future achievement. (2015 DFE published data)

% Pupils achieving a Good Level of Development

The Free School Meal attainment gap is the difference in performance between the 2 cohorts

Bar chart: Pupils eligible for FSM, Pupils not eligible for FSM. Legend: 2013, 2014, 2015

Key Stage 2

In 2015 the Key Stage 2 gap between free school meal and non-free school meal pupils achieving level 4 and above in reading, writing and maths combined was 17.6%. This compares to a gap of 15% reported nationally. Although the combined gap is above 17%, individual subject outcomes were more promising, with the FSM gap in reading at 15% and 16% in Maths.

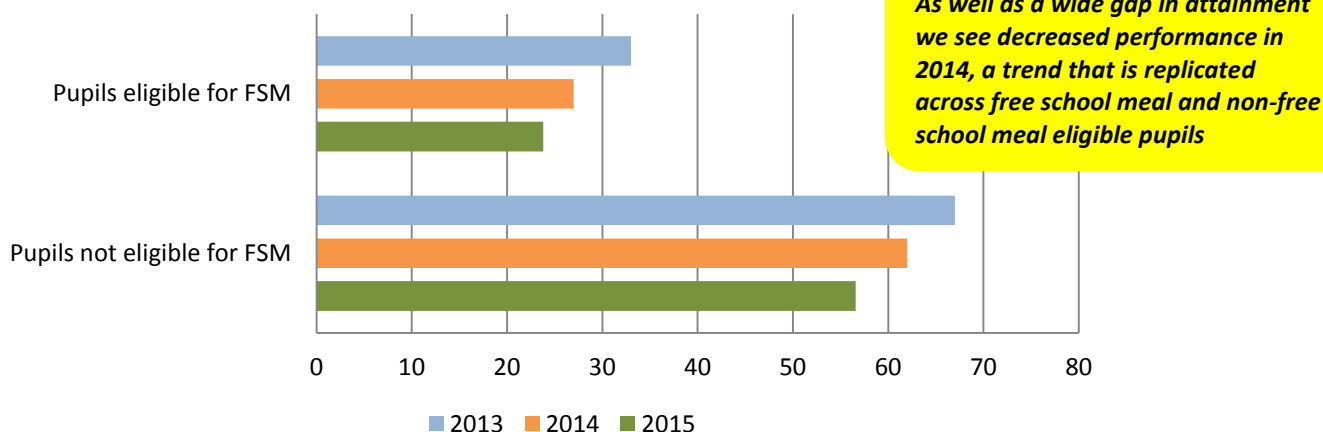**% Pupils achieving Level 4 and above in Reading, Writing and Maths**
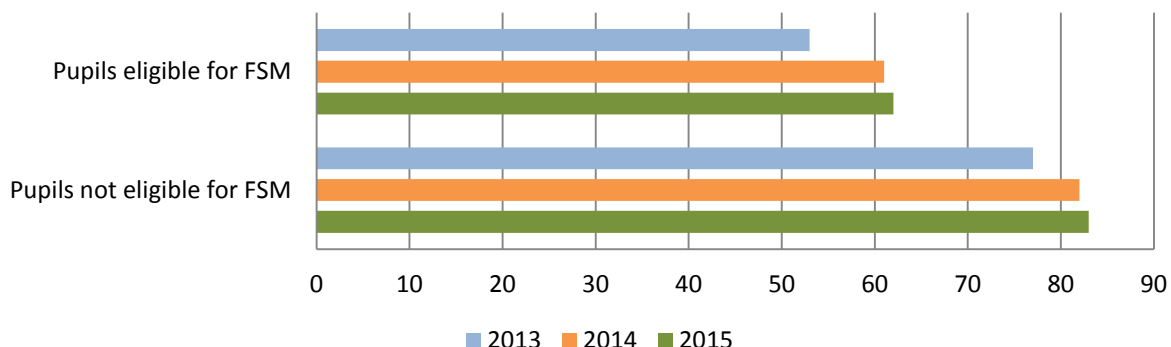
Key Stage 2 performance gaps in 2015 amongst other vulnerable groups shows a similar picture. The gap between Children in Care and other learners achieving level 4 and above in reading, writing and maths was 26.8%. In the same year, just 30.9% of pupils whose ethnicity is classified as Gypsy or Roma achieved level 4 and above in reading, writing and maths, the lowest achieving ethnic group in Kent, and less than 1% achieved level 5. Among pupils whose ethnicity is classified as White Eastern European, only two thirds achieved level 4 and above in reading, writing and maths.

% Gaps in Achieving Level 4+ in reading, writing and maths (DFE published data)		
	2013/14	2014/15
Free School Meal (eligible)	21%	21%
Children in Care	40.5%	26.8%

The Key Stage 2 attainment gaps remains wider than the national average and although it is slowly narrowing in Kent, it is not at a fast enough rate.

Key Stage 4

% Pupils achieving 5+ A*- C including Maths and English

As well as a wide gap in attainment we see decreased performance in 2014, a trend that is replicated across free school meal and non-free school meal eligible pupils

In 2015 Key Stage 4 attainment results show that the gap between free school meal and non-free school meal pupils achieving 5+ A* to C GCSEs including English and Maths was 33.3%, similar to 2014 at 34.8%. Over 16,000 pupils completed GCSEs in 2015, and of these only 143 pupils eligible for free school meals achieved 5+ A* to A GCSEs

2015 results show that the gap between Children in Care and other learners achieving 5+ A* to C GCSEs including English and Maths is 44.4%, a reduction of 5.6% points from the previous year.

The Key Stage 4 data demonstrates that the free school meal gap widens at Secondary level, in both attainment and progress rates. There is a strong correlation between achievement of qualifications and the likelihood of young people post-16 years old becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Key Stage 5

% of pupils achieving Level 3 by age 19
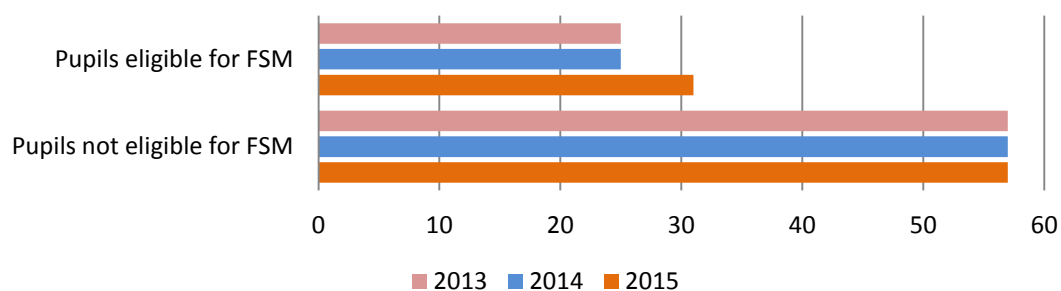
The level 2 gap at age 19 (% point difference between FSM and non FSM students) was down 5% points to 20% in 2015 compared to 25% in 2014.

Not achieving Level 2 qualifications by age 19 is a significant barrier to further learning and achieving sustainable employment. This gap at 19 is above the latest available England average of 17% in 2015 and places Kent in the bottom fourth quartile for the country.

The level 3 gap post 16 at age 19 reduced from 32 to 26 in 2014/15. This is in line with the England average of 25 in 2014/15.

Of 20,009 students in Kent School sixth forms in 2014-15, only 997 FSM students undertook learning at levels 2 and 3, with only 326 completing these programmes. Most other FSM learners moved to FE Colleges or became NEET.

The overall re-take rate for FSM students in post 16 provision was 64.9% (651) compared to 79.5% for non-FSM students. The percentage of AS fails was 23% for FSM students compared to 12.3% for non-FSM students.

Individual school data suggests there are a number of schools doing outstanding work to narrow attainment gaps, however schools with the highest number of learners eligible for free school

meals have a wider FSM attainment gap. Overall the Key Stage 5 retention rate for FSM learners in 2015 was 66% compared to 82% for non-FSM learners.

There are significant differences between Kent's Grammar and non-selective schools when comparing the attainment of free school meal pupils.

Currently 13% (8,502) of pupils attending non-selective schools are eligible for free school meals, compared to only 2% (694) of pupils eligible for free school meals attending Grammar schools.

In 2015, 274 pupils eligible for free school meals completed GCSEs at Grammar schools compared to 1,432 pupils eligible for free school meals completing GCSEs at non-selective schools. For these pupils who completed GCSEs at Grammar school 93% achieved 5+ A* to C grades, a gap of 1.1% against non-free school meal eligible pupils in Grammar schools. The same gap increases dramatically in non-selective schools to 33%.

NEETs

In December 2015, 617 of the 2,336 NEET cohort were vulnerable learners. The largest number of students were Children in Care, SEND, Teenage Parents and Young Offenders. Only 522 of the 5,578 Not Known Cohort are vulnerable learners.

Reducing the NEET group is a significant challenge. These learners face multiple barriers to progressing onto positive outcomes at ages 17 and 18, including poor English and Maths skills and qualifications, poor attendance, low aspirations and insufficient support at key transition points. New employability pathways need to be developed to support vulnerable learners into sustained employment and apprenticeships. The key strategies to reduce these numbers are set out in the NEET Strategy.

Exclusions

'There is... a wealth of evidence linking exclusion from school with academic under-achievement, offending behaviour, limited ambition, homelessness and mental ill health. For example, a Department for Education Youth Cohort Study showed that only 20% of pupils with a fixed-term or permanent exclusion from school in Years 10 and 11 achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A–C (or equivalent), compared to 58% of children not excluded.'* (The House of Commons Education Select Committee)

Kent aspires to be a zero excluding authority, however, there are still too many exclusions from schools and while Secondary exclusions are reducing there is an increasing number of exclusions from Primary school. 50% of Primary age pupils permanently excluded are eligible for free school meals. There is a correlation between deprivation and exclusions at Primary level. Mosaic group L represents a demographic group on low incomes and this group represents 8% of the total Primary population, but makes up 21% of excluded pupils. Group M is also a group characterised by moderate to low income and is over represented in relation to exclusion. They make up 17% of the total school population, but 37% of the permanently excluded population.
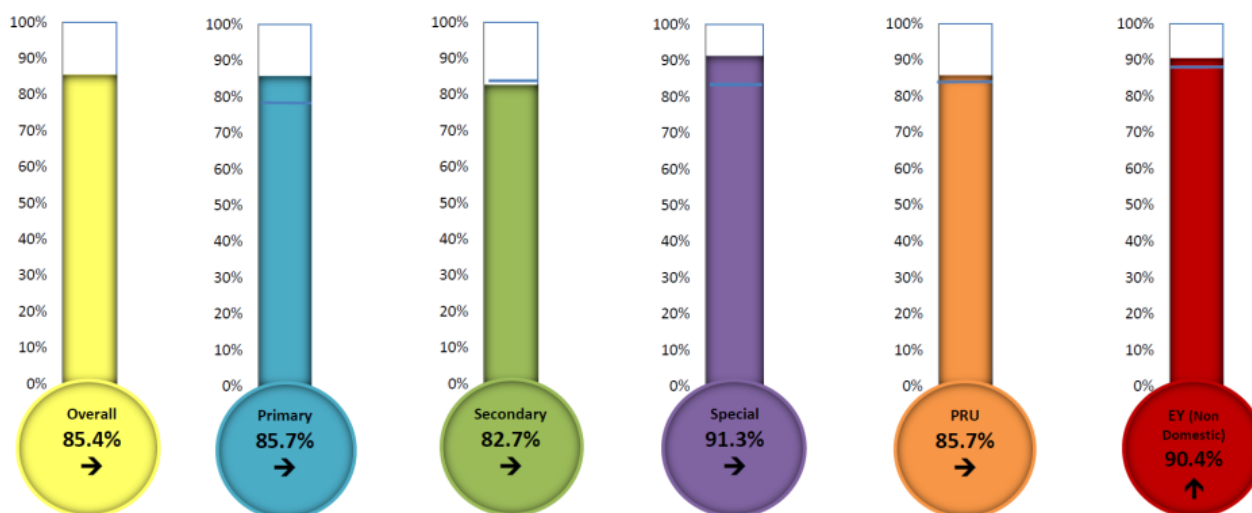
The correlation between exclusion and vulnerable learners is strong in Kent, over half of the pupils who have received multiple (more than one) fixed term exclusions live in Kent's more deprived communities and a quarter were also persistently absent from school. This picture becomes more concerning when we look at pupils who are permanently excluded, when nearly two thirds live in the more deprived communities and nearly a third were persistently absent from school. Key Stage 4 data tells us that 9% of pupils completing GCSEs had multiple fixed term exclusions and of these only 14% achieved 5+ A* to C GCSEs including English and Maths.

Schools

In the 2014-15 school year, 83% of children and young people attended Early Years Settings and Schools that were judged by Ofsted to be either Good or Outstanding. This means that approximately 45,000 children and young people are attending settings and schools that are not yet good.

This is a steadily improving picture, the percentage of schools and Early Years settings judged as good or outstanding has continued to increase since 2012 (59% in 2012, 70% in 2013, 75% in 2014 and currently 84% at January 2016).

% of Schools and EY Settings with Good and Outstanding Ofsted Judgements

| Overall 85.4% → | Primary 85.7% → | Secondary 82.7% → | Special 91.3% → | PRU 85.7% → | EY (Non Domestic) 90.4% ↑ |

N.B. Horizontal lines represent Kent targets for 2015

In 2015, 39% of Primary schools reduced the Key Stage 2 Free School Meal attainment gap. However, only 13% of Primary schools were able to sustain this improvement for 2 consecutive years. 55 Kent Primary schools have consistently narrowed the gap in the attainment of FSM and Non FSM pupils between 2013 and 2015.

In comparison 47% of Secondary schools successfully reduced the Key Stage 4 Free School Meal attainment gap in 2015 and 16% reduced the gap across 2 consecutive years. This does mean, however, that 40% of all schools have not been able to reduce the free school meal attainment gap over the previous year. There are no Kent Secondary schools which have both narrowed the gap in the attainment of FSM and Non FSM pupils and seen an increase in the attainment of Non FSM pupils between 2013 and 2015.

An Overview

	2015								
	EYFS	Primary				Secondary			
	% Achieving GLD	% Achieving Level 4+ (RWM)	No. Fixed Term Exclusions	No. Permanent Exclusions	% Attendance (2013/14)	% Achieving 5+ A*-C GCSE (with E&M)	No. Fixed Term Exclusions	No. Permanent Exclusions	% Attendance (2013/14)
All Pupils	72.9	80	1689	47	96.2	57.6	9030	58	94.4
Boys	65.5	78	1505	44	96.1	52.2	6174	42	94.5
Girls	80.5	83	184	3	96.2	61.1	2856	16	94.3
FSM Eligible	59	62	984	26	93.3	27.0	4963	40	89.0
SEND	25.8	39	1195	28	93.5	22.9	3810	25	89.9
EAL	63	78	84	0	-	59.0	512	3	-
CIC	45.7	55.7	108	0	-	12.5	454	0	-

Activities Supporting Vulnerable Learners

Early Help and Preventative Services

Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) work in partnership with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and third sector organisations to deliver a systemic whole family approach for children, young people and their families. The principles of the service are that:

- We involve children, young people and families

- We strive to improve life chances and build family resilience by using the strengths of families

- Decisions are informed by professional judgement and the working relationship with the child and family

- We ensure that all service delivery and commissioned provision is outcome-focused and informed by evidence-based practice, performance data and evaluation.

Research shows that the early childhood learning and experience has a fundamental impact on the way a child learns throughout the rest of life. Learning outcomes at age four are frequently correlated with GCSE outcomes at age sixteen. As Early Help works with children and young people between the ages of 0-19 (and in specific circumstances to the age of 25), the impact of interventions can often be seen and evidenced across all stages of childhood development.

Following an Early Help notification and assessment vulnerable learners are supported through a key worker engaging with the family, school and other settings. Each family will have an assessment and agree an action plan which will include goals for the child or young person. Typically the focus will be on ensuring the family will be equipped with the skills and confidence to support the child in getting the best outcomes from their school or educational setting.

For older children who are vulnerable learners and who are at risk of becoming NEET the worker will work intensively with them to examine the options and ensure they get back on the pathway to learning and work.

Children's Centres

Prior to the birth of a child the midwifery service works in partnership with Children's Centres to ensure the identification, targeting and tracking of vulnerable families. Following the birth, Health Visitors continue to work with vulnerable families to promote opportunities to ensure the best start in life. Children's Centres work in partnership with targeted families and those who access the universal offer to enhance the 'core purpose' - of all Children's Centres – '' to improve the outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers.'' Central to this philosophy and way of working is the role that Children's Centres play in collaborating with schools and partners in the private, voluntary and independent

sector to ensure that every child reaches their developmental milestones and is school ready. A key tenet of this is the promotion and delivery of the free early educational entitlement for vulnerable 2-year olds. Another core role for a Children's Centre is the engagement of parents, offering advice, guidance and training, so that they are both prepared and ready for the task of parenting and have aspirations for themselves and their children.

Throughout Early Years learning, Primary and Secondary school and beyond into sixth form, college and employment Early Help works in partnership to ensure that every child and young person is able to maximise their potential.

Early Help has an important role to play in motivating, engaging and integrating children and young people who might otherwise be at risk of social and educational isolation. Ensuring and providing opportunities for positive activities through a universal or targeted youth offer, alongside the provision of targeted youth work in schools and the opportunities to undertake Duke of Edinburgh activities.

Early Help also works to ensure that the vulnerable groups amongst the population transitioning from Year 11, benefit from targeted support as part of a strategy to reduce the NEET population. The strategy includes the early identification of Year 10 students with particular indicators who are identified as at risk of becoming NEET. Similarly a multi-agency partnership approach with DWP and Job Centre Plus helps to identify an older cohort of young people and facilitate their engagement back into EET provision.

More than one in twenty Young Carers miss a substantial number of school days as a result of their caring responsibilities. The KCC response to the changes in legislation for Young Carers has resulted in a joint protocol which is a model of good partnership working between children's and adults services, Public Health and each of Kent's seven clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) as well as the numerous providers delivering services on behalf of each of them. The cross cutting nature of the initiative will deliver a coordinated approach to reducing the number of days lost to education and to reducing the achievement gap for one of the County's most hidden and yet vulnerable groups.

PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service

The PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service aims to intervene early and provide timely support to schools, children and families to address the issues of behaviour, attendance and exclusion. The Area Attendance and Inclusion Lead Officers work in partnership with schools to prevent exclusion where appropriate and to re-integrate excluded pupils with effective support. Working closely with practitioners, both in Early Help and external partners, the service, including the Health Needs PRUs, works to empower schools to manage inclusion, absenteeism and exclusion more effectively.

The PRU, Inclusion and Attendance service supports vulnerable learners by:

- Providing dedicated officers engaging with schools in an advisory capacity, undertaking group and project work with schools to improve attendance and to avoid exclusions

- Liaising with Early Help Units and schools to ensure there is effective attendance and inclusion support and advice is available and timely interventions can be made for families receiving more intensive support

- Managing enforcement work for Education Supervision Orders, Penalty Notices and Prosecution, and a more effective approach to enforce school attendance

- Providing an outreach service that supports the attendance, educational achievement and welfare of children from Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Minority Ethnic backgrounds

- Providing support to schools, for learners with challenging behaviour, mental health needs or physical medical conditions.

- Providing advisory services to PRUs to broker the appropriate support for pupils from a range of agencies to enable successful re-integration and positive post 16 destinations

In Year Fair Access cases and Managed Moves are discussed and decided at local Inclusion Forums, a collaborative process that local schools set up and use to mitigate and minimise the risk of children being excluded from school. In most areas schools operate the Inclusion Forums as part of the In Year Fair Access Panel, although the former is a voluntary process while the latter is a legal requirement. KCC's PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS) monitors the performance of school collaboration in Managed Moves and helps schools to identify and share effective practices. Supporting collaborative arrangement for Managed Moves, the service will advise, facilitate and broker support and intervention in order to help schools to find alternatives to exclusion.

Early Years and Childcare

Enhancing Family Involvement in Children's Learning (EFICL)

EFICL is a programme to enhance family involvement in their children's learning. In consultation with multi-agency partners, EFICL has been developed to include a range of strategies which comprise a 'toolkit' for Early Years and Childcare providers, as well as parents to support increased parental and whole family involvement in children's learning.

Support for Children's Centres

Children's Centres are a key part of early childhood services for young children. The Early Years and Childcare Service provides advice, support, guidance and challenge to Children's Centres to ensure that the early learning ethos and early learning activities (e.g. stay and play, parents and child type groups) are in line with EYFS principles and best practice.

Free Early Education for Two Year Olds (FF2)

Currently, approximately 40% of two year olds are eligible for a free early education place with effect from their second birthday. For a child to be eligible, parents must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support through Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act
- Child Tax Credit and / or Working Tax Credit and have an annual income under £16,190
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit

Children are also entitled to a place if they:

- are a Child in Care
- have a current Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care Plan
- are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or
- have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order.

Approximately 7,000 two year olds in Kent are currently eligible for a free early education place, with a supply of over 10,000 places available in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors and with childminders. Take up of these places has not been as high as we would want it to be, although it has generally been increasing month by month over the past year from 40% in September 2014 to 72% in January 2016. We are working to increase the level of take up as a priority for these vulnerable children.

Integrated Reviews for Two Year Olds

In July 2011 the Government made a commitment to explore options for integrating the Early Years Foundation Stage and Healthy Child Programme (HCP) reviews for two year olds, aiming to

- identify the child's progress, strengths and needs at this age in order to promote positive outcomes in health and wellbeing, learning and behavior
- facilitate appropriate intervention and support for children and their families especially those for whom progress is less than expected
- generate information which can be used to plan services and contribute to the reduction of inequalities in children's outcomes.

The Kent Children's Health and Well-Being Board has agreed to pilot Integrated Reviews in Thanet in the first instance. In the context of government guidance Kent's procedures and systems are being introduced and trialled in Thanet with a view to potentially implementing across Kent in due course.

Equality and Inclusion support for Early Years Providers

The Early Years and Childcare Service is now embedding and extending a programme of advice, support and training to Early Years providers to promote equality and inclusion and to narrow gaps in achievement, including focused support for:

- children in need
- children in care
- families where children are in receipt of free school meals
- children with SEND
- children who have English as an Additional Language
- children with health needs
- children with family members in prison
- children who were born prematurely
- summer born children
- children from Forces families.

The service aims to work in an increasingly focused way with private, voluntary and independent providers of early education and also maintained nurseries where lower percentages of children have gone on the achieve a Good Level of Development at the end of the EYFS.

Early Years and Childcare Practitioner Workforce Development

Bursaries and support are available for practitioners to apply for qualifications and higher education training in order to develop the workforce and quality of teaching in Early Years settings. In particular, the available resource is focused in areas of high deprivation, where the quality of provision can be less good than elsewhere and also on developing the workforce in relation to the early identification of and response to need, particularly for children with a special educational need or disability.

Supporting the use of the Early Years Pupil Premium

Research has shown that there is a 19 month gap in school readiness at age 5 between the most and least advantaged children. The introduction of the Early Years Pupil Premium for three and four year olds in April 2015 aims to support Early Years providers to bridge this gap with additional funding, approximately £300 a year for each eligible child. The criteria for eligibility is aligned to that for free early education for two year olds, hence the intention is that this additional resource follows the child from the a two year old place right through to the school-age Pupil Premium. Early Years providers have a key opportunity to maximise this additional funding to improve children's outcomes and to boost disadvantaged children's achievement. The Early Years and Childcare Service offers advice, support and training to practitioners to use this resource to maximum effect.

Kent Early Years Progress Tracker

The Kent Progress Tracker has been refreshed and relaunched to enable Early Years providers to track and monitor all children's progress. Its helps providers to capture, summarise, analyse and

reflect on all the information that they have about children in their setting and to plan for a stimulating learning environment that will ensure all children can reach their full potential. A Children's Centre Progress Tracker is also currently being developed and trialled ahead of being rolled out across the county

Skills and Employability Service

The priority for the Skills and Employability Service is to ensure all young people are engaged in learning or training and have the opportunities to achieve positive destinations until aged 18 (up to 25 for SEND). In partnership with Post 16 providers there is an annual review of 14-19 pathways, apprenticeships and employment opportunities through the district data packs. There is also a focus on raising standards of attainment, closing achievement gaps, increasing participation to age 18 and improving the quality of the 14 – 19 learning pathways.

The services uses performance data to analyse the educational gaps across the County in order to support Schools, FE Colleges and Training Providers in improving outcomes for vulnerable learners, to identify and address gaps in post 16 provision, alongside targeting resources to maximise impact on attainment.

There are a number of focused activities that support young people to participate in high quality learning pathways, these are:

- September Guarantee – working in partnership with providers in each district to ensure there is a post 16 offer that meets the progression needs of all young people

- Tracking participation and destinations and co-ordinating the integration of KCC activity to reduce NEETs and provide targeted support for vulnerable groups who are over represented in the NEET group

- Participation Pathways –a range of specialist programmes to support vulnerable young people achieve positive destinations, including traineeships, supported internships, bespoke school programmes, the Kent Employment Programme, Assisted Apprenticeships, Kent Supported Employment, Troubled Families, and Employability Offer

- Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance – continued development of the Kent careers framework and briefings for schools to raise aspirations for vulnerable young people and the KentChoices4U website and careers fairs, which provide a wide range of information on careers options and local employment opportunities to reduce youth unemployment.

Special Educational Needs

Children and young people with special educational needs are at greater risk of underachieving than their non-SEN peers. In Kent, over 7,000 children and young people, almost 3%, have greater difficulty learning and it is necessary for the authority to put in place a Statement of SEN, or an Education Health and Care Plan, to ensure they receive the necessary support. Within this group there are approximately 600 pupils who face a dual disadvantage because they are in public care. The SEND Strategy recognises that pupils with SEN and disabilities are overrepresented in families facing financial hardship and they are likely to be overrepresented in the FSM group.

A key strategy to deliver more effective earlier interventions for SEND learners has been the devolved model for the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service, working with the 12 lead Special Schools. The partnership model is helping mainstream schools in each District to increase capacity to support learners with SEN and achieving better progress. Through the weekly Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT) process we are drawing together resources to support mainstream schools so that there is effective district based co-ordination of outreach activity. We plan to improve the level of engagement by schools in each district and ensure there is timely access to high quality specialist advice. There are also close links between LIFT and the Early Help and Prevention Service, with Early help workers attending all LIFT meetings to ensure the wider social needs of vulnerable children are addressed.

The SEN Service has established a Lead Officer for each district to ensure it can effectively join up statutory functions required by the Children and Families Act with targeted work being undertaken to support those who under-achieve. Through the role of the District Lead, referral for additional support in respect of pre-school aged pupils with SEN, specialist observation and assessment places for nursery children and referrals for statutory assessment are co-ordinated. Our priorities for 2015/16 include engaging parents through changes in the way that we work with them, ensuring there is greater support for them and ensuring our systems mean we are strong advocates for children and young people.

At an Area Office level we are now joining up SEN casework with targeted high needs funding and quality assurance of SEN provision in order to identify the right children at the right time and improve their outcomes. We want to ensure that children and young people with SEN receive High quality teaching and learning. Through Service Level Agreements with host schools and ambitious expectations of academy sponsors for new schools, we are ensuring that we expand the quality and range of support for SEND learners.

School Provision Planning Team

Commissioning and securing a place in a good local school for every child is the core aim of the Education Commissioning Plan 2016-20. This plan sets out how we carry out our responsibilities for ensuring there are sufficient places of high quality, in the right places, for all learners, while at the

same time fulfilling our responsibilities to raise education standards and be the champion of children and their families in securing good quality education. This plan ensures that vulnerable children have easy access to a good local school by addressing gaps in SEND provision and by commissioning maintained local provision in both Special and mainstream schools. This is delivered by the expansion of Special school places and completing a building programme for Special schools. The expansion of the number of places in Specialist Resourced Bases in mainstream school is being achieved through commissioning an SRP in every new Primary school being built.

Fair Access

The Fair Access Service plays a key role in supporting vulnerable learners. Senior Admission Placement Officers (SAPO) ensure that no child requiring a mainstream school place is without identified provision.   In the case of Children In Care (CIC) schools are approached directly and pre-admission meetings are facilitated, ensuring that schools who admit a child in care feel supported, have all the information they require to put the necessary support in place, to give the best possible chance of a successful transition for the learner. The SAPO works collaboratively with other professionals from Social Services and Virtual Schools, (both Kent and OLA) in order that appropriate educational provision is identified and secured. Where necessary schools are challenged when admission is refused and the Fair Access team presents the case of any learners who are deemed to be hard to place for consideration at the In Year Fair Access Panels.

Some vulnerable learners need to access to an interim Education Programme. This service is managed by the Education Co-ordinator who designs and provides bespoke education packages for Primary Excluded Pupils, Primary SEN/EHC plan pupils awaiting identified provision and Secondary aged Pupils with SEN/ EHC plan also awaiting placement at another provision. Where other local authorities place often vulnerable CIC into Kent without suitable provision being identified, they can commission this service as an interim measure whilst they identify suitable educational arrangements for their child in care. Some of the most vulnerable learners are taught away from the home by qualified teachers and supported by High Level Teaching Assistants who specialise in behaviour therapy.   This approach has been highly effective in enabling children to make the transition from an Education Programme back into school provision as the vulnerable learners have been supported both educationally and therapeutically to manage their behaviours.

To complement this work, pupils accessing an Education Programme have an onward provision identified, transition support is available from Early Help and schools can access advice services from the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service. Cases are presented by the inclusion and attendance advisor and the learner continues to receive the support of the HLTA during the re-integration into school for up to six weeks. This practice has prevented the same learner returning to the programme and it is hoped that these vulnerable learners will be more engaged and will be supported successfully in Primary schools.

Elective Home Education (EHE) officers identify those vulnerable children who appear not to be in receipt of education and for whom it may be in their best interest to return to education. These learners are being identified earlier. There is an important distinction between those families who have made a conscious decision to educate their child at home, and those who have felt pressured into home schooling because their child was not coping in a school setting. The EHE officers are working collaboratively with In-year Admissions, SAPO and CME ensuring that any child without a school place or not in receipt of education is identified and supported back into school.

Children Missing Education (CME) Officers record each young person who is without a school place and work collaboratively with SAPOs, In Year Fair Access, EHE and Early Help to ensure that education provision is identified at the earliest opportunity. Risk assessment procedures are now in place to address those vulnerable children who cannot be tracked after extensive investigations. Processes have been put in place to ensure that these missing children are risk assessed and where the risk assessment highlights cause for concern, the information is shared with the police and the child is recorded as a missing person.

School Improvement

In order to support vulnerable learners the School Improvement Team

- have clear roles and responsibilities for SIAs to act as 'Pupil Champion' for vulnerable learners
- challenge schools through SIAs to ensure schools use data effectively to identity under-performing groups and focus effective strategies to support improved achievement for vulnerable groups, including effective use of the Pupil Premium
- advise schools on proven teaching strategies and other evidence based approaches to narrowing achievement gaps
- broker support for training and consultancy to improve vulnerable group performance including the provision of traded Pupil Premium reviews
- work closely with Safeguarding Team to address safeguarding and e safety issues commissioning support in a timely and appropriate fashion for vulnerable students
- ensure AEN briefings are delivered in each Area to support SENCOs in updating knowledge and skills

Senior Improvement Advisers also work with schools and with KAH to ensure support is available through school to school collaboration, often focused on supporting improvement for vulnerable learners and narrowing gaps.

Educational Psychology

The Kent Educational Psychology Service (KEPS) works to improve outcomes for children and young people who are vulnerable because they have special educational needs or other barriers to their learning and development. Educational Psychologists (registered with the HCPC) have a specialist

role, specified in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (0-25 years). The work of the service promotes a culture of inclusion and collaboration with other education professionals, parents and carers, drawing on evidence based practice to inform intervention and practice. In particular the views of children and young people are given significant weight.

The service's core offer includes SEN statutory assessment work, support to schools and settings in dealing with critical incidents, consultation with schools through the Local Inclusion Forum Teams (LIFTS) and a crucial professional contribution to Local Authority SEND decision making. The advice of an Educational Psychologist must be sought when consideration is being made as to whether to issue an Educational Health and Care Plan (ECHP). Priority is given to early intervention and preventative approaches that can be purchased on a traded basis to deliver a range of interventions through a service level agreement or on a bespoke basis.

Community Learning and Skills Service

The Community Learning and Skills Service is a provider of education and training for all learners over the age of sixteen. CLS supports vulnerable learners across the county by targeting provision for 16 to 18 year olds and by providing programmes of study which lead to employment , delivering traineeships and apprenticeships especially for young people who are currently not in education, employment or training

A number of the programmes provided by CLS are targeted to areas of deprivation across Kent, including those areas where skills gaps have been identified. These include the apprenticeship programme for over 19 year olds, and bespoke courses relevant to local needs and opportunities in the most disadvantaged communities.

A number of opportunities are provided for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities to gain and improve Independent Living Skills. The Response programme is focused on supporting unemployed and low waged adults progress into paid employment, further learning and volunteering. Family Learning has a range of opportunities for parents and carers with few formal qualifications and a poor experience of learning to enjoy discovering new skills with their children, enhancing their ability to support their children's learning and helping to build a positive approach to education for the whole family. CLS plays an important role by providing second-chance learning opportunities for people who have not succeeded in the education system to reach their potential and to improve their personal development and wellbeing.

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School funding: Pupil Premium

By Tim Jarrett, Robert Long and David Foster

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Summary

The Coalition Government introduced the Pupil Premium in 2011 to provide additional school funding for those children classed as having deprived backgrounds, and also those who had been looked after (by a local authority) for more than six months. In addition, the Service Premium was introduced for children whose parent(s) are, or have since 2011, served in the armed forces.

Since their introduction, changes have been made to the eligibility criteria and the funding levels of the premiums. The Pupil Premium has increased from £430 per pupil in 2011–12, to £1,320 per primary pupil and £935 per secondary pupil in 2016-17 (in 2014-15 the Government introduced different Pupil Premium rates for primary and secondary pupils). In addition, while eligible looked after children previously attracted the same Pupil Premium as deprived children, in 2014-15 the "Pupil Premium Plus" was introduced. For 2014-15 and 2015-16 current or certain previously looked after children each attracted £1,900 of funding. The eligibility criteria for the Service Premium have been broadened since 2011-12 and the rate has increased from £200 to £300.

The Spending Review in November 2015 included a commitment from the Government to continue funding the Pupil Premium at existing cash terms levels.

This briefing sets out the original formulation of the Pupil Premium policy, and how it has developed over time. It also includes information on how the Premiums are paid to local authorities and passed on to schools, as well as information on the effectiveness of the Premium. It does not include information on the Early Years Pupil Premium.

This briefing applies to England only.

Related briefings

This note is one in a series of Library Briefing Papers on school funding. School funding: Developments since 2010 (SN/SP/6702) sets out the changes made by the Coalition Government to school funding in England and plans for further reform under the Conservatives.

The following historical notes are also available:

- School funding: annual settlements under the Coalition Government (SN/SP/6701)
- School funding: 2006–2010 policy changes under the Labour Government (SN/SP/6703)

1. Background and introduction

1.1 What is the pupil premium?

Introduced in April 2011, the Pupil Premium is additional funding, outside of the Dedicated Schools Grant, paid to publicly funded schools in England with the aim of raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. The eligibility for the Pupil Premium have changed since its introduction (see section 2). For the 2016-17 financial year schools receive funding for each of the following groups of pupils:

- For each child registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years:

    — £1,320 for pupils in reception to year 6

    — £935 for pupils in year 7 to year 11

- £1,900 for each child who has been in local authority care for 1day or more, or who has left local authority care because of one of the following:

    — Adoption

    — A special guardianship order

    — A child arrangements order

    — A residence order.[1]

Box 1: Early Years Pupil Premium

The Early Years Pupil Premium, introduced in April 2015, is additional funding for 3 and 4 year olds in state-funded early education whose parents are:
- in receipt of certain benefits;
- are currently looked after by a local authority in England or Wales; or
- have left care in England and Wales through adoption, a special guardianship order or a child arrangement order.

In the 2015-16 financial year, providers received £302.10 for each eligible child who took up their full entitlement to 570 hours of state-funded early education.

Further information on the Early Years Pupil Premium is provided on the Gov.uk website at Early years pupil premium: guide for local authorities. Unless stated otherwise, references in this briefing to the Pupil Premium do not include the Early Years Pupil Premium.

1.2 Introduction of the pupil premium

The May 2010 Coalition Programme for Government stated: "we will fund a significant premium for disadvantaged pupils from outside the schools budget by reductions in spending elsewhere".[2]

Further detail was provided in the *Consultation on school funding 2011-12 – Introducing a pupil premium*, published in July 2010:

> One of the Government's key priorities is to introduce a pupil premium to support disadvantaged pupils, who continue to underachieve compared with their peers. Funding for the

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[1]   Pupil premium: funding and accountability for schools, Gov.uk, last updated 8 September 2016.
[2]   Cabinet Office, The Coalition: our programme for government, May 2010, p28

premium, which will be introduced in September 2011, will come from outside the schools budget to support disadvantaged pupils from Reception to Year 11. Schools will decide how best to use the premium to support the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

The intention is to allocate the funding by means of a separate specific grant and not through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The size of the premium will vary between areas to reflect current differences in funding, ensuring that more money is available for currently lower funded authorities. Over time, this will mean that the same amount of funding will be available for deprived children no matter where they are. We are seeking views on the indicator to determine which pupils should attract the premium.

looked after children (LAC), who generally have poor attainment, will be covered by the pupil premium using a separate process since deprivation indicators do not generally include them.

We will explore the scope for extending the pupil premium to include Service children.[3]

The consultation document set out a number of questions on the proposals, including the proposed measure of deprivation and the issue of looked after children.[4]

Consultation response: funding and flat-rate Pupil Premium

The consultation closed on 18 October 2010, and two days later in his statement on the 2010 Spending Review, the then Chancellor, George Osborne, told the House:

We will also introduce a new £2.5 billion pupil premium, which supports the education of disadvantaged children and will provide a real incentive for good schools to take pupils from poorer backgrounds. That pupil premium is at the heart of the coalition agreement, and at the heart of our commitment to reform, fairness and economic growth.[5]

The Government issued its response to the consultation on 13 December 2010.[6] This stated that:

- The Pupil Premium would be introduced from April 2011 and paid to local authorities as a separate grant.
- £430 would be paid in respect of the following pupils in years from Reception to Year 11:

    — Deprived children

    — Children who have been looked after for more than six months.

- A premium of £200 would be paid for children whose parents are in the armed forced.
- The indicator used to reflect deprivation in 2011-12 would be eligibility for free school meals, although in future years the

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[3]   DfE, Consultation on school funding 2011-12 – Introducing a pupil premium, July 2010, p4

[4]   As above, p22

[5]   HC Deb 20 October 2010 c964

[6]   DfE, The school funding settlement for 2011-12: The pupil premium and Dedicated Schools Grant, 13 December 2010, p3, para 2

Government intended to extend eligibility to pupils who had previously been eligible for FSMs.

In terms of funding, the response stated, "total funding for the premium will be £625m in 2011-12 and will be built up over time amounting to £2.5bn a year by 2014-15".[7]

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[7]   As above, p3, para 4.

2. Developments since implementation

2.1 Summary 2011-12 to 2016-17

The table below highlights the key points in how policy on the Pupil Premium has developed since its introduction in 2011-12:

Group	Year	Qualifying indicator	Planned funding (per pupil)
Deprived children	2011-12	Currently in receipt of free school meals	£430
	2012-13	Extended to children who had been in receipt of free schools meals at any point in the past six years	£600
	2013-14	As in 2012-13	£900
	2014-15	As in 2012-13	Primary: £1,300[a] Secondary: £935
	2015-16	As in 2012-13	Primary: £1,320 Secondary: £935
	2016-17	As in 2012-13	Primary: £1,320 Secondary: £935
Looked after children	2011-12	Currently looked after by a local authority and has been for more than six months	£430
	2012-13	As in 2011-12	£900
	2013-14	As in 2011-12	£900
	2014-15	Looked after for one day or more, and including children who have been adopted from care or leave care under a special guardianship or residence order.	£1,900
	2015-16	As in 2014-15 (residence orders now known as child arrangements orders)	£1,900
	2016-17	As in 2014-15	£1,900
Service Children	2011-12	Children whose parents are currently in the armed forces	£200
	2012-13	As in 2011-12	£250
	2013-14	Extended to children whose parent(s) have died in service ad are in receipt of pensions under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and the War Pensions Scheme. Also extended to include pupuils otherwise ineligible in 2013-14 but who had been eligible previously.	£300
	2014-15	Extended to children who were eligible previously but whose parents are no longer in the armed forces or are divorced.	£300
	2015-16	As in 2014-15	£300
	2016-17	As in 2014-15	£300

(a) each primary pupil eligible for the deprivation premium attracted an additional £23

The table below shows the Pupil Premium funding allocations by element up to 2016-17:

Pupil Premium allocations 2011-12 to 2016-17, million

	Allocations by elemennt			Total
	Deprivation	Service children	Looked after children[a]	
2011-12	£594	£9	£20	£623
2012-13	£1,141	£13	£26	£1,180
2013-14	£1,784	£17	£38	£1,840
2014-15	£2,230	£19	£164	£2,413
2015-16	£2,235	£21	£160	£2,416
2016-17	£2,215	£22	£175	£2,412

Note: (a) including previously looked after children from 2014-15 onwards

Source: DfE, *Pupil premium allocations,*   various years

2.2 Spending Review 2015: future funding levels

The Conservative Party Manifesto for the 2015 general election included an undertaking to "continue to provide the Pupil Premium, protected at current rates."[8] This commitment was provided for in the *Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015*:

> 1.163 The Spending Review protects the core schools budget in real terms, enabling the per pupil rate for the Dedicated Schools Grant to be protected in cash terms, including £390 million of additional funding given to the least fairly funded areas in 2015-16. The pupil premium will also be protected at current rates.[9]

2.3 Eligibility criteria issues

The requirement to register for free school meals

The Pupil Premium is only paid to those children registered to claim free school meals (FSM), and does not include those who are eligible but are not registered; the term used by the Department for Education (DfE) is "known to be eligible for Free School Meals".[10]

In the DfE's *Consultation on school funding 2011-12: Introducing a Pupil Premium*, the Coalition Government stated that "allocating funding on the basis of FSM eligibility, as recorded on the pupil-level annual school census, has the very substantial benefit that it reflects the specific characteristics of the individual pupil. It is easily collected and is updated annually".[11] The document also stated that the "main issues" with the FSM indicator included that it reflected "registered eligibility for free meals rather than actual eligibility".[12]

A November 2012 research report commissioned by the DfE compared data on benefit receipt and FSM figures and estimated that nationally around 200,000 children aged 4-15 "appear to be entitled" but are not

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8   Conservative Party Manifesto 2015, p34.
9   HM Treasury, Spending Review and Autumn Statement, November 2015, p44
10   Email to the Library from DfE official, 4 May 2012
11   DfE, Consultation on school funding 2011-12 – Introducing a Pupil Premium, p11, para 33
12   As above, p12, para 35

claiming FSM. This implied that around 14% of pupils entitled to FSM are not claiming them. The rate was highest for those at either end of this age range with 21% of 4 year olds and 22% of 15 year olds. It was also higher in less deprived areas; 23% in the South East and Eastern regions and more than 30% in some local authorities.[13]

DfE guidance, sent to local authorities in 2012, stated that "local authorities should remind schools that their Pupil Premium allocation each year is determined by the number of FSM pupils they have on roll on January census day".[14]

If registered, the child does not have to actually receive FSM for the Pupil Premium to be paid; simply being registered is sufficient. The DfE issued a template letter for local authorities to use in order to parents to encourage FSM registration, which stated "if you don't want your child to have the school meals they can continue as normal – as long as you qualify and are registered, the school still gets £600 extra [i.e. the Pupil Premium]".[15]

In a June 2015 report on the efficacy of the Premium (see section 5), the NAO raised the identification of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium as an issue and stated that the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals for 5-7 year olds in September 2014 (removing the need to register to receive a meal) and also Universal Credit might "make it more difficult comprehensively and consistently to identify all disadvantaged pupils."[16]

Box 2: Automatic registration for free school meals

In December 2015 Frank Field MP introduced a Bill under the Ten Minute Rule to provide for all eligible children to be automatically registered for free school meals. The Bill received a First Reading but did not progress any further before falling at the end of the 2015-16 session.

In response to a parliamentary question in March 2016 about automatic entitlement to free school meals, the then Education Secretary, Nicky Morgan, stated that she "agree[d] that all families who are entitled to free school meals should be able to obtain them" and that she was "keen…to make progress on this very important matter." The Minister additionally stated, however, that there were "issues to do with the collection of data and the sharing of information between different benefits."[17]

Universal Credit

In 2012, the DfE acknowledged that the eligibility criteria for the Pupil Premium would have to be reconsidered because of the introduction of Universal Credit:

> The Department for Work and Pensions plan to phase in Universal Credit between October 2013 and 2017, replacing many current in-work and out-of-work benefits with a single payment. This means that the majority of the current criteria for determining entitlement for FSM will no longer exist. We are currently

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[13]   DfE, Pupils not claiming free school meals, Research Report DFE-RR 235, p1
[14]   DfE, Increasing registrations for FSM and the Pupil Premium: Information for local authorities, webpage [taken on 4 May 2012]
[15]   DfE, Example letter to parents, webpage [taken on 4 May 2012]
[16]   NAO, Funding for disadvantaged pupils, June 2015, p11
[17]   PQ13032, 30 October 2015.

considering proposals for new eligibility criteria which can be aligned with Universal Credit.[18]

Box 3: Universal Credit roll out

Universal Credit was first introduced for a small subset of new claimants in certain areas in 2013. Having learnt from these initial experiences, the Department for Work and Pensions intends to expand the scheme by rolling out to successively wider areas and more complex caseloads. Roll out has, however, been delayed on a number of occasions.

Universal Credit is now available in all jobcentres in Great Britain but in most areas only for new claims for people with relatively simple circumstances (largely single people and couples without children). Roll-out to all claimant groups began in some areas in May 2016 and is, as of July 2016, expected to complete by September 2018. The final migration of the remaining "legacy" benefit claimants to Universal Credit is then expected to start in July 2019 and complete by March 2022.[19]

In response to a parliamentary question in June 2016 the Minister, Sam Gyimah stated that the DfE were still considering the eligibility criteria for FSMs following the introduction of Universal Credit but that, in the meantime, any child in a family in receipt of Universal Credit will continue to be entitled to FSMs:

> **Rachel Reeves**: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when new eligibility criteria for free school meals under universal credit will be (a) published and (b) implemented.
>
> **Sam Gyimah**: We will continue to ensure that children from the poorest families benefit from a free school meal. My Department is continuing to work closely with the Department for Work and Pensions to consider eligibility criteria for free school meals following the introduction of Universal Credit. In the meantime, any child in a family in receipt of Universal Credit will continue to be entitled to free school meals.[20]

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18   DfE, School funding reform: Next steps towards a fairer system, March 2012, p32, para 2.4.4
19   HC Deb 20 July 2016 cc23-4WS.
20   PQ 40160 [free school meals], 20 June 2016.

3. Payment and accountability

3.1 Payment

Pupil Premium funding is [paid](#) in different ways depending on the type of school involved:

- For local authority maintained schools, the Government pays the local authority the relevant funding in quarterly instalments, and they pass the funding on to schools.
- Academies and free schools are paid directly, also in quarterly instalments.[21]

Looked after children

Virtual school heads are responsible for managing pupil premium funding for looked after children and for allocating it to schools and alterative provision settings. They can pass on the full funding received in respect of a child to the relevant school or alterative provider, but are not required to do so. For example, some funding can be pooled to pay for activities that will benefit a group of or all of an authority's looked after children.[22]

The responsibilities of virtual school heads include, but are not limited to:

- identifying their local authority's look after children
- ensuring that the method used to allocate the money is simple so that children can benefit from it without delay
- working with schools and alternative providers to make sure that they spend their pupil premium funding for looked after children to help meet the needs identified in the children's personal education plans
- being able to demonstrate how the pupil premium funding they manage is raising the achievement of looked after children
- returning any un-spent or un-allocated funding to the DfE.[23]

An article on the *TES* website from July 2016 reported that in 2014-15 over £2.5 billion of pupil premium funding for looked after children was not spent by local authorities and was returned to central government. The article noted the reasons for this given by two councils:

- The DfE allocating money based on more looked after children than the local authority could identify as being in care.
- Money sometimes being received too late in the year to spend.[24]

Children educated outside their home local authority

Some looked after children live and are educated in a different authority to the one which looks after them. When the Pupil Premium was introduced, the DfE decided that it would allocate the premium to the

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[21]   DfE, [Pupil premium: funding and accountability for schools](#), last updated 8 September 2016.

[22]   DfE, [Pupil premium: virtual school heads' responsibilities](#), last updated 19 March 2015.

[23]   As above.

[24]   [Exclusive: millions in funding for pupils in care left unspent](#), *TES,* 1 July 2016.

local authority which looks after the child, but where the child was educated in a mainstream setting, the local authority would be required to pass on the full level of the premium to the school or academy where the looked after child is being educated.[25]

Service Premium

The "service premium" is allocated to the local authority where the child is educated. When the premium was introduced in 2011-12 the DfE stated that the local authority will be required by the conditions of grant to pass on the premium to those schools where the children are being educated.[26]

3.2 Accountability measures

Local authority maintained schools are required to publish their strategy for the school's use of the pupil premium on their websites. Unless provided for in their funding agreement, there is no parallel obligation on academies, although the DfE recommends that they publish the same material.[27] The current model funding agreement does require academies to publish information about how they spend their pupil premium allocation and what impact it has had on educational attainment.[28]

The DfE has published information on what local authority maintained schools *must* publish online and what academies *should* publish. The lists are essentially the same; the information relating to maintained schools states:

> You must publish a strategy for the school's use of the pupil premium. You no longer have to publish a 'pupil premium statement'.
>
> For the current academic year, you must include:
>
> - your school's pupil premium grant allocation amount
>
> - a summary of the main barriers to educational achievement faced by eligible pupils at the school
>
> - how you'll spend the pupil premium to address those barriers and the reasons for that approach
>
> - how you'll measure the impact of the pupil premium
>
> - the date of the next review of the school's pupil premium strategy
>
> For the previous academic year, you must include:
>
> - how you spent the pupil premium allocation

[25] DfE, The school funding settlement for 2011-12: The pupil premium and Dedicated Schools Grant, 13 December 2010, pp8–9, paras 24, 25 and 26

[26] DfE, The school funding settlement for 2011-12: The pupil premium and Dedicated Schools Grant, 13 December 2010, p10, para 28

[27] DfE, What academies, free schools and colleges should publish online, 30 June 2016.

[28] DfE, Mainstream academy and free school: single funding agreement, April 2016, para 2.17.

- the impact of the expenditure on eligible and other pupils.[29]

Schools are also accountable for their use of the Pupil Premium via the performance tables, which report on the performance of disadvantaged pupils compared to other pupils. Ofsted inspections also report on the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils who attract the Pupil Premium. If Ofsted identifies issues with a school's provision for such pupils it will recommend that it commissions a pupil premium review. Reviews can also be recommended by other bodies, including the DfE and a school's local authority, academy trust or regional schools commissioner.[30]

Looked after children

Ofsted inspections of services for looked after children will ask for an annual report from the virtual school head, which should include:

- details of how the pupil premium for looked after children has been managed; and
- evidence of how pupil premium spending has supported the achievement of children looked after by the local authority.[31]

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[29]   DfE, What maintained schools must publish online: pupil premium, last updated 1 November 2016.

[30]   DfE, Pupil premium: funding and accountability for schools, last updated 8 September 2016.

[31]   DfE, Pupil premium: virtual school heads' responsibilities, last updated 19 March 2015.

4. School admissions for pupils in receipt of the Premium

Between July and September 2014, the Government ran a [consultation](#) on changes to the *School Admissions Code* that would give admission authorities in England the **option** to prioritise disadvantaged children in their admission arrangements.[32]

The Government published its [response](#) to this consultation in October 2014. This stated that following a positive response to the initial proposals, the Government would:

- Allow all schools to have the freedom to give admission priority for all children attracting the pupil premium, the early years pupil premium and the service premium. (Academies and free schools already have this option; the change would expand this freedom to local authority maintained schools.)
- Allow admission authorities of primary schools which have a nursery to give priority in their admission arrangements to disadvantaged children who attend the nursery.

Neither or these changes are compulsory; schools are free to adopt them or not as they wished.[33]

These changes came into force in December 2014. The revised [School Admissions Code](#) includes the new provision (see paras 1.39A and B).

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[32] DfE, [Changes to the School Admissions Code](#), July 2014
[33] DfE, [Changes to the School Admissions Code: Government consultation response](#), October 2014, p4-5

5. Effectiveness of the Pupil Premium

The Education Endowment Foundation has produced a teaching and learning toolkit for schools on how to use the pupil premium effectively. It has also produced an evaluation tool to help schools measure the impact of their approaches.[34]

2014 Ofsted report

In July 2014, Ofsted published an update on the progress schools have made in using their pupil premium funding to raise achievement for eligible pupils. The report stated that:

> There are encouraging signs from inspection that the concerted efforts of good leaders and teachers are helping to increase outcomes for pupils eligible for the pupil premium. However, it will take time to establish whether this increased focus will lead to a narrowing in the attainment gap between those eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils.
>
> In 151 reports analysed between January and December 2013, there was an association noted between the overall effectiveness of the school and the impact of the pupil premium.[35]

A PQ response from the then schools Minister, David Laws, set out some further information:

> 24. **Mrs Glindon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education what progress her Department has made on closing the attainment gap between pupils receiving free school meals and others; and if she will make a statement. [904972]
>
> **Mr Laws:** The gap between free school meals (FSM) pupils and others achieving Level 4 or above in key stage 2 reading and mathematics has narrowed from 19.3 to 16.2 percentage points between 2011 and 2013. The gap in FSM pupils and others achieving at least five A*-C grade GCSEs including English and mathematics has narrowed from 27.4 to 26.7 percentage points over the same period.
>
> The most recent Ofsted assessment is that school leaders are spending the pupil premium more effectively than at any time since the funding was introduced in 2011. Of 151 schools in the assessment, the attainment gap between free school meal pupils and their peers was closing, sometimes quite quickly, in all 86 schools judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding. Gaps are also closing, albeit more slowly, in two thirds of the 50 sampled schools rated 'requires improvement'.[36]

2015 NAO report

On 30 June 2015, the National Audit Office published a report on funding for disadvantaged pupils. The report concluded that, while the Pupil Premium has the potential to "bring about a significant

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[34]   DfE, Pupil premium: funding and accountability for schools, last updated 8 September 2016.
[35]   Ofsted, The Pupil Premium: an update, July 2014, p4
[36]   HC Deb 21 July 2014 c918-919W

improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils", it will take time for its full impact to be known. The report further concluded:

> While the attainment gap has narrowed since 2011, it remains wide and, at this stage, the significance of the improvements is unclear. More time and further evaluation will be needed to establish whether the Department has achieved its goals. However, the early signs are that many schools, supported by the Department's investment in the EEF, are using the Pupil Premium to help disadvantaged pupils in useful ways.[37]

While acknowledging the work done so far to share best practice, the report stated that the Government and schools had more to do to "optimise value for money":

> The Department has already created a strong drive to improve support for disadvantaged pupils by targeting the Pupil Premium at schools on a rational basis; clearly communicating the funding's objective; investing in research and sharing best practice; and empowering teachers to try new things. However, the Department, working with others, has more to do to optimise value for money. Not all disadvantaged pupils currently attract funding. Some schools do not focus funding on disadvantaged pupils appropriately or use the most cost-effective interventions, and, in any event, the evidence base is still underdeveloped. Furthermore, the core school funding that the Pupil Premium supplements is not distributed on the basis of need. Most importantly, there is a risk that accountability and intervention mechanisms allow schools to waste money on ineffective activities for many years without effective challenge. As the impact of the Pupil Premium becomes clearer, the Department will need to review if it is investing the right amount in it, including whether spending more in this way could allow it to close the gap more quickly, generating wider savings for the taxpayer.[38]

A BBC news article quoted a Government official stating in response to the report that:

> The NAO's report recognises the important role which the pupil premium has had in improving educational outcomes, and ultimately life chances of some of the most disadvantaged young people.
>
> However, we know there is more to be done to tackle educational inequality and we will consider the findings of the NAO report carefully.[39]

In April 2016, the then Education Minister, Sam Gyimah cited the NAO report when responding to a parliamentary question regarding the Government's assessment of the pupil premium's impact:

> **Royston Smith**: To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of pupil premium on ensuring children who are classed as behind reach their expected grades at Key Stages 1 to 4.

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[37]   NAO, Funding for disadvantaged pupils, June 2015, p11.
[38]   NAO, Funding for disadvantaged pupils, June 2015, p11.
[39]   Pupil-premium impact 'will take time', says spending body, BBC News, 30 June 2015.

> **Mr Sam Gyimah**: The Government is determined to deliver educational excellence everywhere so that every child, regardless of background, reaches their full potential.
>
> Information on the proportion of low achieving disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard at key stage 4 is available from the KS2-4 transition matrices for disadvantaged pupils on RAISEonline. These show progression from sub-levels at key stage 2 to grades at key stage 4 for a range of subjects, for both disadvantaged and other pupils. Similar information is not published regularly for progression between other key stages.
>
> In 2015 the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee reviewed the pupil premium and concluded that while it is too early to assess the full impact of the funding, there is evidence that the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has started to narrow.
>
> The Department for Education's gap index provides a more accurate measure over time in light of changes to assessments. It shows that attainment has risen and the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed - by 7.1 per cent at key stage 2 and 6.6 per cent at key stage 4 since 2011, the year the pupil premium was introduced.
>
> This means better prospects and a more prosperous life as an adult for this group of pupils. But we refuse to accept second best for any young person, which is why we are continuing the pupil premium at current rates for the duration of this parliament, providing funding to support schools to continue improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.[40]

2016 Social Mobility Commission report

On 16 November 2016 the Social Mobility Commission published its fourth 'state of the nation' report. On the impact of the pupil premium, it stated:

> There is some evidence that the Pupil Premium has had a positive effect on the attainment gap, but is not definitive, because it cannot definitely say what would have happened to attainment had it not been introduced.[41]

The report described the pupil premium as a "welcome focus on the needs of the very poorest children" but argued that this had "not been matched by a broader intention to break the link between social demography and educational destiny in our schools across income groups."[42]

In addition, the report recommended that the Early Years Pupil Premium should be doubled in value and stated that this could be funded via a redistribution from the primary pupil premium budget.[43]

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[40]   PQ32434, 12 April 2016.
[41]   Social Mobility Commission, *State of the Nation 2016: Social Mobility in Great Britain*, November 2016, p81.
[42]   As above, p54.
[43]   As above, p51.

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