

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE - PUPIL PREMIUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the Select Committee - Pupil Premium held in the Swale 1 - Sessions House on Monday, 13 November 2017.

PRESENT: Mrs L Game (Chairman), 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

ALSO PRESENT:

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms L Adam (Scrutiny Research Officer), Mrs K Goldsmith (Research Officer - Overview and Scrutiny), Mr G Romagnuolo (Research Officer - Overview and Scrutiny) and Mrs A Taylor (Scrutiny Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

8. **Ms Angela Maxted (Headteacher - Cheriton Primary School), Ms Deby Day (Headteacher - Guston C of E Primary School), Tim Woolmer and Debra Exall (KCC)**
(Item 1)

The Chair welcomed the guests to the Committee. A video from the Kent Service Children's Voice Conference on 19 June 2017, highlighting the experiences of service children, was [shown](#) to the Committee.

Q – In the video, one of the children stated that they had attended ten schools. What impact does moving school have on service children?

Angela stated that she currently had a Year 2 pupil who was in their fourth school. She noted that there had been lots of psychological research on the impact to service children who often experienced a period of shutdown. The impact often depended on how long the children knew in advance about the move and how the situation was handled by the parents. She highlighted that sometimes children knew 12 – 18 months about a potential move whilst some were given the minimum notice period of six weeks. Deby explained that it also depended on the child's character; some children were more adaptable whilst others would find the transition distressing.

Deby highlighted a visit to Brunei to talk to service children and their families about life in Kent and the UK prior to their deployment. She had anticipated that it would be difficult to 'sell' life in Kent but as part of the visit, they had discovered that opportunities for children were limited in Brunei; by moving to the UK service children would be able to access lots of opportunities such as visits to the coastal parks, Canterbury and London.

Q – As Headteachers of Guston and Cheriton Primary Schools, do you work closely together?

Deby explained that Cheriton Primary School was close to the Shorncliffe Garrison, Folkestone and Guston Primary School was located next to the, now demolished, Connaught Barracks, Dover where Service Families Accommodation (SFA) was located. The SFA served the Shorncliffe Garrison so a half of the Guston Primary School's students were service children. She confirmed that both schools worked closely together.

Q – What do you spend your Service Pupil Premium on?

Angela explained that the Service Pupil Premium had been implemented to mitigate against the impact of deployment and mobility on service children. It had been introduced at the height of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq alongside the military covenant. The Service Pupil Premium was £300 per child and was not linked to attainment. Angela stated she was a member of the National Executive Committee for Service Children in State Schools; she reported that the Service Pupil Premium could change in the future.

Angela stated that 100, out of 500 children who attended Cheriton, received the Service Pupil Premium. The money was used to pay for extra support staff including seven Nepalese speakers and twelve days of educational psychologist services which was the same amount used by a secondary school. She had also used the money on a particular occasion to buy books and toys for children whose possessions had been ruined in transit.

Deby noted that 50% of the Guston student population consisted of service children, approximately 50 children. As it was a smaller school with smaller classes, service children were able to access 1 to 1 support. Service children were assessed as they joined the school and through the Special Persons Scheme were able to identify an adult in the school, such as a cook, teaching assistant or teacher, who they were able to talk to if there was something that worried or concerned them. A pupil Information Profile (PIP) was completed for children who were transitioning to a new school, to give an overview and background of the child to the new school. She noted that service children, particularly where English was an additional language, often experience a period of shutdown as they adjusted. She stated that the school had one Nepali speaker who was a teaching assistant and it would be useful to have an additional Nepali speaker.

Angela highlighted that service children at Cheriton were encourage to write a letter or email to their deployed parents once a week at school as the internet connection in service accommodation was not always good. An email from the child's teacher to the parents was sent once a month and a chatty email from the Headteacher was sent every six weeks which parents replied to and engaged with.

Deby reported that Guston had trialled a scheme whereby dads of service children, who were being deployed, would be recorded reading their children a story; none of the dads turned up to the recording session and she was later told by the Gurkha Major that it was not something dads did. She stated that the scheme highlighted the difficulty for the schools getting to know service children, their families and culture due to their constant mobility. She explained that when a Gurkha service child had suffered a bereavement, she changed how she dealt with it to take into account how the community wanted to respond.

Angela noted that when parents returned from a tour, the school put a banner outside of the school to welcome them home and alert the civilian community of their return. Sometimes parents returned home from their tour injured and some of the non-military families were not sure how to react; Angela always encouraged them to say hello and welcome them home. She cited a parent, who had returned from a tour with a facial injury, dropping their child off at school wearing a hoody and covering their face; she had

invited the parent in and two days later, the parent came into the playground without wearing the hoody.

Debra stated that Kent is fortunate in having two headteachers with such experience and expertise in relation to service children and there is much that others in the education community can learn from them. Only 49 schools in Kent had more than 10 service children as part of their student population. She explained that schools with a handful of service children found it challenging to use the £300 as effectively as schools which had a higher number of service children. She encouraged the Committee to raise awareness to all schools of their responsibilities to meet the needs of service children.

Tim stated that Cheriton and Guston exemplified best practice in supporting service children. Schools which had very low numbers of service children had a lack of financial support and expertise amongst teaching staff to support those children and the children themselves did not have peer support from children in a similar position. The Civilian-Military Partnership Board had organised outreach events to get service children together and share their experiences; unfortunately service children from schools with low numbers of service children, who would most benefit from the events, often did not attend despite explicit targeting.

Q – Which pupils are eligible for Service Pupil Premium?

Angela explained that the Service Pupil Premium was introduced in 2011 and pupils attracted the Service Pupil Premium if one of their parents or stepparents were serving in the armed forces or had retired within the last 4 – 6 years.

Q – How do you ensure the Service Pupil Premium is used for its intended purpose?

Angela explained that she was held to account by publishing the details of the how the Service Pupil Premium is spent on the school's website, having army representatives on the Governing Body and as part of Ofsted inspections. Parents were also able to challenge how the money was spent; she had previously been challenged over the provision of iPads to service children which had been bought to enable the children to Skype their deployed parents. Deby noted that Guston Primary School now had three service family representatives on its Governing Body including a corporal.

Q – Is the Service Pupil Premium linked to attainment?

Angela confirmed that it was not linked to attainment like the Free School Meals Pupil Premium. She stated that it was harder to measure the correlation between the Service Pupil Premium and attainment. At Cheriton Primary School after school clubs had been moved to lunchtime as parents of service children worked later and were not able to pick them up. She noted that it was also important to engage and encourage service children in other activities within the school such as the School Council.

Deby noted whilst a school's core business was attainment, it was clearly stated in the guidance that the Service Pupil Premium was to mitigate against deployment and mobility. She stated that Pupil Premium for children in receipt of Free School Meals was used to run catch-up programmes for them; the Service Pupil Premium was more contextual and used to enable service children to feel secure, comfortable and happy to learn.

Angela reported that the Family Liaison Officer at Cheriton Primary School recently took the service children who had arrived from Brunei to the local library to enable them to

enrol and get a library ticket which their parents might not have known to do. Deby highlighted the reading workshops run at Guston Primary School for parents; it was important that parents were confident reading with their children as it could impact on their child's learning.

Angela stated that service children had a unique set of skills and experiences and were often unphased by events which non-service children may find challenging. Service children were experts about the world around them including the best place to have school dinners, best school swimming pool and shortest school day. She noted that both schools had good links with schools around the world.

Tim reported that a lot of schools did not currently publish details of how the Service Pupil Premium was spent on their website.

Deby noted that Service Pupil Premium was an area often overlooked; a system to track student's progress, Target Tracker, did not initially include service children as part of the pupil premium cohort which had now been adjusted.

Angela explained that there were differences in the needs of families from Gurkha, Navy and RAF backgrounds. She highlighted concerns experienced by service children including the death of a deployed parent and a child who thought their deployed parent was working over 20 hours a day as they did not understand the time difference. She handed a pack to the Committee of presentations she had given to the Civilian-Military Partnership Board about supporting service children. She noted that Kent had the eight largest number of service children.

Q - Why is the £300 Service Pupil Premium so low?

Angela confirmed that no other allowances were available. She explained that when she joined the National Executive Committee for Service Children in State Schools in 2006, the Ministry of Defence had no way of knowing how many service children there were; subsequently a Service Child tab was introduced on the national schools database. the Service Pupil Premium was introduced as a nominal amount in 2011. She stated that 18 months ago it was rumoured that the Service Pupil Premium would be cut completely due to the end of conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Angela noted that a number of army administration posts such as chaplains and support workers had been based in Folkestone but had now moved to Aldershot; those workers had provided the families with someone within the armed services who they could talk to. Deby explained that the Gurkha support officers used to be able to translate for families but were no longer allowed to in case their interpretation was incorrect.

Angela stated that service children did not choose military life and she felt that she and Deby had to champion them as their needs were not always recognised by other services; the NHS did not provide translated letters to promote services such as the flu jab.

Q – Does the disruption to service children have an impact on their attainment?

Deby explained that service children particularly Nepalese children outperformed other students. There was a cap on their attainment as their English was always not at a higher level; additional funding was available for those whose first language was not English. Angela stated that the mobility of service children was challenging for non-service children and staff. All service children joining the school were assessed within a week.

Q – Should Service Pupil Premium be extended until the child reaches Year 11 regardless of when the parent retires?

Angela explained that the service children were now classified as Ever 6 by the Department of Education; she thought Year 11 was a sensible cut-off. She reported that service personnel often experienced the symptoms of PTSD 4 – 7 years after the event; in the last ten years two parents had come into school during a psychotic episode. She confirmed that service children whose parents had died whilst serving in the armed forces attracted the Service Pupil Premium until the end of Year 11.

Deby stated that all the support given to service children at Guston Primary School cost more than the Service Pupil Premium received. Both Angela and Deby reported that the provision of support to its large service children student population had been absorbed into the identity and ethos of the school.

Angela highlighted the Reading Force booklist for service families which enabled the deployed parent to have a conversation or email about the books their child was reading; once the book was read, it was added to a scrapbook and once completed sent off and the child received a certificate and the parent a letter. Cheriton Primary School had introduced a similar scheme to use with children whose parents were separated or worked away.

Q – What can KCC do to improve the effectiveness of the Service Pupil Premium in Kent?

Tim stated that there were a number of measures that KCC could undertake including encouraging neighbouring schools to come together to support Service Pupil Premium students and achieve an economy of scale; raising awareness with regards to the publication of pupil premium data; and looking into the impact of mobility on service children's attainment. He highlighted that Members, who were often engaged with local schools or sat on Governors Boards, could act as advocates for service children, raising the profile of their specific needs, the importance of using the service pupil premium appropriately and publishing the details.

Angela noted that North Yorkshire County Council had an education adviser who supported service children; she explained that whilst she and Deby championed service children, they also had a day job to do too. She stated that KCC staff needed to be aware of the distinct needs of service children. She thanked the staff at Cheriton Library for their help and enthusiasm in welcoming and enabling the service children to join the library.

Q – Do Ofsted recognise the challenges of a Year 5 – 6 service child joining a school?

Deby confirmed that service children who joined in Year 5 - 6 were recognised as a specific cohort by Ofsted. If a service child arrived in Year 4, the school would have to evidence the progress they had made at the school so they were quickly assessed when they joined.

Angela noted that extenuating circumstances were taken into account as part of the SATs assessment particularly the children who were affected by the Nepali earthquakes.

The Chair thanked the guests for their attendance.

9. James Turner (Deputy CEO - Education Endowment Foundation)
(Item 2)

1. The Chairman welcomed the Select Committee Members and James Turner, Deputy Chief Executive, Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), to the Select Committee meeting and she invited all those present to introduce themselves.
2. Mr Turner considered that there were three roles his Foundation had in the way that Pupil Premium funding was spent, these were:
 - a. By making academic research readily available, accessible and all in one place
 - b. By generating evidence and filling gaps in knowledge
 - c. By disseminating information and ensuring this had an impact in schools.
3. Q: do schools pay for the service of EEF?
A: no, the guidance and resources were free for schools to use. The EEF was set up in 2010/11 by the coalition government; it was an independent charity which also received charitable income funds. The EEF also ran projects which were subsidised but schools were usually asked to pay a contribution to projects.
4. The EEF had a social mobility and education equality agenda, it was set up particularly to raise the attainment of those on Pupil Premium to give young people the best academic start in life as well as focusing on non-academic progress.
5. EEF worked to build up an evidence base of knowledge as a tool to raise attainment and to focus limited resources and effort. It was important to know where and how funding was spent in schools.
6. Q: is enough good practice being shared?
A: James Turner explained that the landscape was changing all the time, how good practice was shared was more complicated today than it was in the past, some of the suggested practices were low or no cost and it was necessary to work across the whole class as well as targeting some pupils if they were falling behind their peers.
7. A Member referred to 'effective feedback' within the toolkit, in her experience teachers were told to change their feedback regularly, it was a very top down approach and this was difficult and often not cost effective. James Turner stated that the toolkit was intended as a gateway to the evidence: there were numerous ways of implementing effective feedback but for policies such as triple marking for example there was no evidence that this was successful. The toolkit was designed for schools to discuss and to determine how it could work best in each school. Rather than adding to the teacher burden, it was meant to reduce it.
8. Q: is there any evidence for effective feedback success stories with Pupil Premium children?
A: it was very difficult to monitor how well effective feedback was working, teachers needed resources and continuing professional development to ensure effective working.
9. Q: referring to the support through the transition years, particularly primary to secondary it was understood that there was less engagement at secondary than in

primary and what more could KCC do to try to encourage assistance during transition, perhaps through the Kent Association of Head Teachers?

A: James Turner offered to circulate to Members work undertaken on transition, in 2011 there was funding available as 'catch-up premium'. It was considered that even the best catch up programme did not make up for the average gap between Pupil Premium children and their peers. It was important to invest in children early on and to prevent gaps arising if at all possible. The Pupil Premium funding was still important in secondary schools where the gap between Pupil Premium children and non-Pupil Premium children widened, in addition England lagged behind many other countries with a wide gap at secondary school.

10. Q: why is the gap widening at secondary school?

A: James Turner considered that the existing funding could be spent more cost effectively and it was vital to ensure that it was targeted at the students it was intended to help. Very importantly, England had a very segregated secondary school system, children from lower income families were more likely to go to school with children from the same background and this had a knock on effect teacher recruitment and retention etc. This was not an issue just about grammar schools however because even if grammar schools were removed, the top comprehensives had few Pupil Premium children in them.

11. Q: What is the toolkit and what are its benefits?

A: it was a tool for ensuring academic research was placed into the hands of practitioners. It contained strands that teachers might employ to improve standards in their classroom. Each strand looked at the average month's impact you might get from implementing it, the average cost and the security of the evidence behind it. This was a gateway of information but the disadvantage was that it was potentially a blunt tool. It was a place to start a conversation about what evidence was most useful and most applicable. The toolkit was available to schools free on the EEF website. 2/3 of senior leaders stated that they used the toolkit but there would be different levels of engagement.

12. The toolkit contained a mix of different approaches which could be used alongside teaching, there was no intention to add to teachers' workload and approaches should be considered within the confines of cost and time.

13. Q: how effective is using FSM as a measure or definition of children who need additional support?

A: James Turner explained that, on balance, while FSM was imperfect, it was widely available and eligibility was a good predictor of educational disadvantage.

14. Q: Regarding having small or large numbers of Pupil Premium children in cohort what were the advantages and disadvantages?

A: James Turner explained that the relative FSM gap existed in all types of school with different Ofsted ratings. His understanding of the research was that some schools with large cohorts of FSM students had tailored their provision to that group and did particularly well; in some schools with smaller cohorts, the schools were unsure how best to spend Pupil Premium funding.

15. Q: Was there a correlation between amount of Pupil Premium money and those providing high impact on progress for Pupil Premium children? Members had undertaken a visit to a school which had 50% Pupil Premium students and was an outstanding school. The School clearly had an outstanding model of utilising the funding received; Members were interested in whether the model was being used elsewhere.

16. Q: Regarding early years intervention what was in place to reduce the price of early years help?
A: James Turner explained that improving teaching across the board for Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium students was a journey for schools. The more schools improved performance and tackled issues the less need for remedial work. There was a need to make some of the work as cost effective, and therefore as sustainable, as possible. Lots of early years programmes were available but these were often very expensive and it was important to ensure that the programmes had an impact.
17. Q: Members asked about the targeting of 2 year olds, to ensure they were ready for primary school.
A: James Turner explained that there was a huge potential for provision for 3yrs+ to prepare students to learn. By the time children were at primary school the gap already existed. There were challenges around recruiting and training the early years workforce. It was difficult to find really good early years programmes with good evidence behind them, and it was then important to ensure that the provision continued throughout the school years.
18. Members considered that in some instances some academically able Pupil Premium children's result got worse throughout school and some non-Pupil Premium children improved, it was thought that some of this was due to parental engagement and aspiration. James Turner stated that the evidence was clear that the home environment played a huge role, learning did not only happen at school. Parental involvement was critical in the performance of students; this was strongly correlated with academic and social mobility outcomes. There was a question over how best to help parents who were less involved to get involved? Programmes to date which had been tested by the EEF had had limited success. Low cost ways could help a little; some schools had trialled keeping in touch with parents via text message.
19. Members recognised the challenges presented. It was worrying to see numbers of 'don't know' on pg 36 of the agenda pack in relation to 'to what extent does the Pupil Premium Grant allow your school to: Target resources to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils? There was a need to embed information on Pupil Premium Grant in teacher training and this to be continued through continuing professional development.
20. Q: Referring to the importance and focus on early years Members found it difficult to understand that there was a lack of early year's programmes. Did EEF publish early year's programmes?
A: James Turner explained that EEF had only recently started looking at early years, but there were a number of projects which would be reporting soon, EEF was trying to build evidence base but this was a relatively new challenge. Head teachers could go to the website and look at early years toolkit and also completed evaluation projects.
21. Q: Had EEF undertaken an evaluation of the reasons behind the UK being out of line in relation to the gap between Pupil Premium children and their peers, what this because less was spent on early years and there being more child poverty and a lack of aspiration?
A: EEF evaluated programmes rather than international comparisons. However, the Sutton Trust and others had shown that when the education model in the UK was compared with other countries the UK did not always come out well in terms of

investment in early years and social mobility measures. The gap was quite big; at age 4 there could be one year between FSM child and non FSM child.

22. A Member suggested that EEF could visit 'good' feeder nurseries and look at their early years programme; this could produce robust evidence to go alongside anecdotal evidence.

23. Q: What could KCC do, if anything, to improve the effectiveness of Pupil Premium in raising the educational attainment of vulnerable pupils and in narrowing the attainment gap?

A: James Turner explained that there were two elements: awareness raising and continuing professional development. In addition there was a need to ensure head teachers and teachers were aware of evidence-based resources and how accessible they were. The most effective schools in an area could be used as champions, as EEF were doing through Research School.

24. Regarding champion schools, Members suggested that there should be a system to ensure financial input into those champion schools. This financial input might then give teachers the time to go beyond their own schools and talk to other schools. Or similarly rewards for schools which are doing well at closing the gap, James Turner explained that there had been a tranche of Pupil Premium awards but at present there was no financial recompense. It would be beneficial to have some money in the system for schools that were doing well to share their ideas. James referred Members to the Strategic School Improvement Fund which was a grant to support schools and aimed to target resources at the schools most in need to improve school performance and pupil attainment; to help them use their resources most effectively.

25. The Chairman thanked James Turner for attending the meeting and for answering Members' questions.