



AGENDA

SELECT COMMITTEE - PUPIL PREMIUM

Tuesday, 21st November, 2017, at 10.00 am

Ask for: **Gaetano Romagnuolo**

**Stour Room, 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)

10.00 – Ashley Crittenden, Headteacher, West Borough Primary School
10.45am (Pages 3 - 6)

11.00 – Viki Butler and James Brooke, Vice Principals, The Canterbury
11.45am Academy (Pages 7 - 10)

12.00 – Sue Beauchamp, Head Teacher, Two Bridges PRU, serving
12.45pm Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and South Sevenoaks (Pages 11 -
14)

Appendix (Pages 15 - 34)

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)

John Lynch
Head of Democratic Services
03000 410466

Monday, 13 November 2017

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Pupil Premium Select Committee

Biography

Ashley Crittenden, Headteacher, West Borough Primary School

Ashley is the Headteacher at West Borough Primary School. This is a Good school with Outstanding features (Ofsted June 2107). They have 16 classes including a maintained nursery.

A set of Core Values underpin all that they do which ensure high expectations of both learning and behaviour. Their inclusive school is based on a large, well-resourced site just outside Maidstone town centre. Their excellent facilities include a library and music room, extensive outdoor learning areas and an ASD Satellite. The school also has a Children's Centre within the grounds.

- There are currently 491 pupils on roll, including our Nursery.
- 24% PPI, 10% SEN, 27% EAL
- Of PPI, 18% are also SEN
- 38 languages spoken. After English, Polish is the next most significant language

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Pupil Premium Select Committee

Hearing 6

Tuesday 21st 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.

Themes and Questions

Ashley Crittenden, Headteacher, West Borough Primary School

- Please introduce yourself and offer an outline of the roles and responsibilities that your post involves.
- Please provide an overview of Pupil Premium allocation in your school. Is there a clear strategy for how Pupil Premium funding should be spent, and is this communicated to all stakeholders?
- To what extent has Pupil Premium funding been effective in narrowing the attainment gap between vulnerable children and their peers in your school?
- How do you track what Pupil Premium funding is spent on? How do you monitor the impact of Pupil Premium funding in your school?
- Does your nursery receive any Early Years Pupil Premium? In your view, to what extent is the Early Years Pupil Premium effective in promoting the academic achievement of vulnerable younger children?
- In your opinion, what other strategies and interventions – if any – can be implemented to maximise the impact of the Pupil Premium?
- In what ways – if any - do you encourage parents and carers to apply for Free School Meals if they are eligible?
- Are there any other issues, in relation to the review, that you wish to raise with the Committee?

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Pupil Premium Select Committee

Biography

Viki Butler, Vice Principal, and James Brooke, Vice Principal, The Canterbury Academy

The Canterbury Academy came into existence in October 2010 when schools judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding' were allowed to convert to academy status, benefit from greater freedoms and shape their future. Our academy was one of the first converter academies in the country.

The Canterbury Academy Trust consists of various component parts each with its own head:

- The **Canterbury Primary School**, which will shortly benefit from a new building and state of the art facilities as it expands into a 2 form entry school
- The **Canterbury High's Middle School** (with approximately 600 students)
- The **Canterbury High's Senior School** (with approximately 400 students)
- The **Canterbury High's Sixth Form College** (with over 400 students) which also include The Canterbury Institute of Performing Arts and The Canterbury Institute for Sport
- The **14-24 Enterprise & Employability College**
- The **Canterbury Area Community, Engagement and Enterprise Service** (which offers a variety of provision across the area)

The Canterbury High School is a 'school for all the talents'. The key beliefs which underpin and drive all we do are simple. We believe that every learner matters and that every child is good at something - that all children walk with genius - and that school should be the place where children discover and build upon their own individual talents. We believe in the comprehensive ideal. We believe that all talents should be valued. We believe that academic excellence is important but that there are also other important things. We believe that art, music, drama, sport, practical skills, being a good person, caring for and working with others are all valuable. We believe in team work and that all of our students should have pride in themselves and their contribution to the school.

The Canterbury High School has a house system represented by four different coloured ties, providing opportunities for healthy competition and recognising achievement. Our aim is to provide 'as much as possible, as often as possible, for as many as possible'. We believe that education and learning can be fun. At the end of their time with us we aim for all our young people to leave as happy, positive, confident individuals, proud of what they have achieved, prepared to be life-long learners and ready to play an active and constructive part in society.

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Themes and Questions

Viki Butler, Vice Principal, and James Brooke, Vice Principal, The Canterbury Academy

- Please introduce yourself and offer an outline of the roles and responsibilities that your post involves.
- Please provide an overview of Pupil Premium allocation in your schools. Do you have a clear policy on how Pupil Premium funding should be spent, and is this communicated to all stakeholders?
- To what extent has Pupil Premium funding been effective in narrowing the attainment gap between vulnerable children and their peers in your school?
- How do you track what Pupil Premium funding is spent on? How do you monitor the impact of Pupil Premium funding in your school?
- Does your nursery receive any Early Years Pupil Premium? In your view, to what extent is the Early Years Pupil Premium effective in promoting the academic achievement of vulnerable younger children?
- What is the role of senior leaders and governors in relation to Pupil Premium?
- In your view, are there other strategies and interventions that can be implemented to maximise the impact of the Pupil Premium?
- Are there any other issues, in relation to the review, that you wish to raise with the Committee?

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Pupil Premium Select Committee

Biography

Sue Beauchamp, Head Teacher, Two Bridges PRU, serving Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and South Sevenoaks

Two Bridges School is the PRU provision for West Kent supporting Primary and Secondary Schools across Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and South Sevenoaks. We work with approximately 140 students over an academic year but only ever having up to 64 on dual roll at any one time.

Our primary intervention Programme is a nurture-based system where pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are always partly in their mainstream school but coming out for parts of the week to work intensively on behaviour practices. Likewise our Key Stage 3 students spend a period of 14 weeks with us before reintegrating to mainstream Secondary Schools and our Key Stage 4 students will stay often to the end of the academic year and sit a full range of GCSE courses then transition to College or Apprenticeships.

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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.

Themes and Questions

Sue Beauchamp, Head Teacher, Two Bridges PRU, serving Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and South Sevenoaks

- Please introduce yourself and offer an outline of the roles and responsibilities that your post involves.
- Please discuss the accessibility issues for Pupil Premium students who are referred to PRUs.
- Please provide an overview of Pupil Premium allocation in your school. How do you track what Pupil Premium funding is spent on? How do you monitor the impact of Pupil Premium funding in your school?
- To what extent has Pupil Premium funding been effective in narrowing the attainment gap between vulnerable children and their peers in your school?
- In your view, to what extent do external factors in areas of high deprivation have an impact on the academic progress of vulnerable pupils?
- In your opinion, what other strategies and interventions – if any – can be implemented to maximise the impact of the Pupil Premium?
- What can KCC do, if anything, to improve the effectiveness of the Pupil Premium in closing the attainment gap between vulnerable children and their peers?
- Are there any other issues, in relation to the review, that you wish to raise with the Committee?

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Department
for Education

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

Research brief

November 2015

**Shona Macleod, Caroline Sharp, Daniele
Bernardinelli - National Foundation for
Educational Research**

Amy Skipp - Ask Research

Steve Higgins - Durham University

Executive Summary

Introduction, aims and objectives

The performance gap between pupils from more and less advantaged backgrounds in England is one of the largest among OECD countries. The pupil premium was introduced by the coalition government in 2011 to increase social mobility and reduce the gap in performance between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers. Schools receive funding for each disadvantaged pupil and can use the funding flexibly, in the best interests of eligible pupils.

In November 2014, the Department for Education commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to investigate the differences between schools in the performance of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The study aimed to identify:

1. Whether there are any common features of schools that have narrowed the gap successfully.
2. Whether there are any possible groups/clusters of schools that have narrowed the gap, and why this is the case.
3. What are schools that have narrowed the gap doing compared to other schools? What leads to them doing well? What lessons can be learnt from them?

For the purpose of this study, disadvantaged pupils are identified in the national school datasets used in this analysis based on their eligibility for the Pupil Premium. This includes pupils eligible for free school meals at any point within the past six years (Ever 6 FSM) and pupils looked after by the local authority¹.

Key findings

What are schools doing to improve the performance of disadvantaged pupils?

The survey found that schools had used a large number of strategies (18 per school, on average) in order to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils since 2011. The most popular strategies, and those that schools considered to be the most effective, focused on teaching and learning, especially: paired or small group additional teaching; improving feedback; and one-to-one tuition. These strategies are all supported by evidence of effectiveness in the Sutton Trust/Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Teaching and Learning Toolkit².

¹ This definition of disadvantaged pupils was used to define pupil premium eligibility prior to April 2014 and includes pupils looked after by the local authority for more than six months. In April 2014, eligibility for the pupil premium changed to include pupils who have been in local authority care for one day or more and pupils who have left local authority care because of one of the following: adoption; a special guardianship order; a child arrangements order.

² See: [The Sutton Trust/Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\) Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#).

Most schools (93.1 per cent) had received support from governors for their plans to improve disadvantaged pupils' performance and over half (54.2 per cent) had received such support from local authorities.

Although schools tended to be using similar strategies, more successful schools³ had introduced the strategy they identified as their 'most effective' strategy earlier than less successful schools (before 2011 – though they were still using it in 2014). Further analysis found that schools were using certain groups of strategies overall, and that these were related to success in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

- More successful schools were more likely to be using metacognitive⁴/independent learning and peer learning strategies (although this relationship was only statistically significant in secondary schools).

Metacognitive and peer learning strategies have independent evidence of effectiveness (see the Sutton Trust/EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit).

The research found some statistically significant relationships between primary schools with less success in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the strategies they adopted.

- Less successful primary schools were more likely to be using strategies to improve attendance, behaviour or pupil engagement in the curriculum, or to have made improvements to the classroom/school environment.
- Less successful primary schools more likely to: employ additional teaching assistants (TAs) or increase TA hours to work specifically with disadvantaged pupils; introduce new literacy and numeracy programmes; and use paired/small group additional teaching.

However, rather than suggesting that these strategies are ineffective, these findings may be a reflection of differences in schools' stages of development. It is possible that more successful schools had already embedded these approaches in their practice and therefore did not identify them as specific strategies for raising disadvantaged pupils' attainment introduced after 2011.

How are schools raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils?

Leaders in schools that were more successful in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils emphasised that there was no single intervention that had led to success. Rather, more successful schools appeared to be implementing their strategies in greater depth

³ More successful schools are those where the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority was better than expected, after taking account of the characteristics of the school and the pupil cohort.

⁴ Metacognitive strategies are designed to help pupils to learn how to learn, by encouraging them to think about their own learning more explicitly. This can be achieved by teaching pupils specific strategies to set goals, and monitor and evaluate their own academic development.

and with more attention to detail. By comparing more and less successful schools, the study identified seven building blocks for success.

1. Promote an ethos of attainment for all pupils, rather than stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as a group with less potential to succeed.
2. Have 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. Focus on high quality teaching first rather than on bolt-on strategies and activities outside school hours.
4. Focus on outcomes for individual pupils rather than on providing strategies.
5. Deploy the best staff to support disadvantaged pupils; develop skills and roles of teachers and TAs rather than using additional staff who do not know the pupils well.
6. Make decisions based on data and respond to evidence, using frequent, rather than one-off assessment and decision points.
7. Have clear, responsive leadership: setting ever higher aspirations and devolving responsibility for raising attainment to all staff, rather than accepting low aspirations and variable performance.

More successful schools saw raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils as part of their commitment to help all pupils achieve their full potential. They prioritised quality teaching for all, seeing attendance, behaviour and emotional support as necessary but not sufficient for academic success. They made every effort to understand every pupil as an individual and tailored their programmes accordingly. They linked teaching and learning interventions to classroom work, monitored attainment and intervened quickly to address learning needs. They ensured TAs had the necessary training and expertise to deliver interventions, provide feedback and monitor progress.

Senior leaders in less successful schools identified a number of barriers to success. Some had low expectations for what it was possible for these pupils to achieve. They felt it would be impractical to develop individual plans to meet pupils' learning needs. Leaders in schools with fewer disadvantaged pupils pointed out that they had less funding and could therefore not afford to introduce more expensive changes, and some leaders felt constrained by the need to demonstrate they had spent the funding exclusively on eligible pupils.

How do school characteristics relate to success for disadvantaged pupils?

The study identified several common features of schools where disadvantaged pupils (identified in the national datasets used in the analysis as those eligible for free school

meals (FSM) or looked after by the local authority⁵) have achieved better or less well than expected, in relation to the performance of disadvantaged pupils nationally. There was considerable consistency between the characteristics associated with a school's level of success in the most recent year and improvement in schools' results over time. (But note that these are correlations and do not necessarily imply causal relationships.)

- Schools with higher levels of pupil absence had lower performance among disadvantaged pupils than schools with otherwise similar characteristics.
- Primary schools with disadvantaged pupils who had previously achieved higher results at Key Stage 1 had higher results for disadvantaged pupils at Key Stage 2. Similarly, secondary schools with disadvantaged pupils who had achieved higher results at Key Stage 2 performed better at Key Stage 4.
- Schools with a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils were associated with higher performance among disadvantaged pupils (and schools with a lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils were associated with lower performance among disadvantaged pupils).
- Schools with larger year groups overall (including both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils) were associated with lower performance among disadvantaged pupils.
- Primary schools with higher proportions of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) were associated with lower performance among disadvantaged pupils.
- Schools with a higher proportion of pupils from white British ethnic backgrounds were associated with lower performance among disadvantaged pupils.
- Schools located in certain areas (especially the South East, South West, East of England and North West) had poorer results, compared with schools in London or the North East⁶.
- Rural secondary schools⁷ had lower results among disadvantaged pupils, compared with schools with otherwise similar characteristics.

In relation to school type, the study found that:

- Converter academies⁸ were associated with higher attainment among disadvantaged pupils at both primary and secondary level, and greater improvement over time at primary level.

⁵ This is the definition of eligibility for the pupil premium that was used prior to April 2014

⁶ The research allocated schools to one of nine areas, based on the former Government Office Regions – see [The Office for National Statistics Administrative Geography Maps](#)

⁷ Note that a large number of rural primary schools could not be included in the analysis due to the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils in each school.

⁸ A school formerly maintained by the local authority, which has voluntarily converted to academy status.

- There were mixed findings for sponsored⁹ academies, which were associated with poorer performance at primary level, but better performance and improvement at secondary level.
- Selective schools and Teaching Schools were associated with higher performance among disadvantaged pupils even after taking account of the influence of a high-performing intake and other characteristics that were associated with pupil progress.

The study found no evidence of a statistically significant relationship between positive performance among disadvantaged pupils and being a member of a Teaching School Alliance (TSA). Being a member of an academy group was not associated with performance at primary level, but there was a small positive relationship between disadvantaged pupils' performance among secondary schools that were members of a small academy group. (Please note that the analysis did not take account of the length of time a school had been a member of a TSA or part of an academy group.)

Discussion and conclusion

This study found that between one- and two-thirds of the variance between schools in disadvantaged pupils' attainment can be explained by a number of school-level characteristics. This suggests that schools' intake and circumstance are influential but they do not totally determine pupils' outcomes. It therefore implies that schools have meaningful scope to make a difference. The research went on to identify a number of actions associated with schools that were more successful in raising disadvantaged pupils' attainment – both in what they do and the way they do it.

More successful schools have been focusing on disadvantaged pupils' performance for longer and appear to have developed more sophisticated responses over time. Leaders in more successful schools said it had taken a period of around three to five years to see the impact of changes they had introduced feed through to pupils' results.

Taken together, the findings suggest that schools which have been more successful in raising the performance of disadvantaged pupils have put the basics in place (especially addressing attendance and behaviour, setting high expectations, focusing on the quality of teaching and developing the role of TAs) and have moved on to more specific improvement strategies. These schools were 'early adopters'. Schools that are earlier in the improvement journey are more likely to have smaller proportions of disadvantaged pupils and/or to have larger year groups. In order to make further progress, the research indicates that they need to support pupils' social and emotional needs, address individual pupils' learning needs; help all staff to use data effectively and improve engagement with families. Once these strategies are in place, the next steps on the improvement journey include focusing on early intervention, introducing metacognitive and peer learning

⁹ A school formerly maintained by the local authority, which has been transferred to academy status as part of a government intervention strategy.

strategies and improving their effectiveness in response to data on individual pupils' progress. Schools which have made the greatest progress in improving the attainment of disadvantaged pupils are in a position to set even higher expectations and to spread good practice through working with neighbouring schools and well as continuing to learn from and contribute to national networks.

Overall, this research suggests that there is no 'one size fits all' solution to closing the attainment gap. Instead, a number of measures are required, tailored to each school's circumstances and stage on the improvement journey. These measures include setting a culture of high expectations for all pupils, understanding how schools can make a difference, selecting a range of evidence-based strategies tailored to meet the needs of individual schools and pupils, and implementing them well.

Further research

The research identified several associations which would benefit from further investigation. The research team has selected three areas where further research would have the greatest value.

1. Further research into the relationship between absence and attainment for disadvantaged pupils, to investigate the reasons underlying the association and understand whether improving attendance for all pupils is likely to be an effective strategy for closing the attainment gap.
2. Further research into the relationships between disadvantaged pupils' performance and geographical regions, including investigating the relationships at pupil level.
3. Further research investigating the utility of the 'pathway to success'. Does this have resonance with schools? If less successful schools are supported to move to the next step on the pathway, does this result in improved outcomes for disadvantaged pupils?

Research design

The research took place in three phases between December 2014 and April 2015.

Phase 1 investigated the relationship between school characteristics and outcomes for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. It used school-level data from school performance tables (available on the Department for Education website¹⁰) to construct a number of quantitative models which included school descriptors (such as its type and region) and the characteristics of the cohort of pupils who were assessed in the relevant years (such as their prior attainment, cohort size, proportion of pupils eligible for FSM, SEN and ethnic composition). By estimating the relationship between these characteristics and the outcome variable (i.e. the school-level performance of pupils from

¹⁰ <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance/>

disadvantaged backgrounds) it was possible to account for some of the differences between schools in the performance of disadvantaged pupils. The statistical models used in this research were able to account for between 30.5 and 62.3 per cent of the variance between schools in disadvantaged pupils' performance.

Phase 2 focused on the strategies schools were using to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. It comprised a survey of 759 primary and 570 secondary schools in England (the response rate was 21.9 per cent). The survey was sent to a sample of schools selected from Phase 1 to represent those where disadvantaged pupils had attained higher or lower results than expected, given the characteristics of the school.

Phase 3 focused on how schools were implementing their strategies and approaches. It comprised telephone interviews with senior leaders in 49 schools (eight special schools, 20 primary schools and 21 secondary schools). The interview sample was chosen to represent schools where disadvantaged pupils had attained higher or lower results than expected, given the characteristics of the school. Interviews were semi-structured and lasted about an hour. Interviewers wrote up notes into a template, using audio recordings to check the accuracy of verbatim quotes.



Department
for Education

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National Audit Office

Report

by the Comptroller
and Auditor General

Department for Education

Funding for disadvantaged pupils

Summary

1 The Department for Education (the Department) defines pupils as being disadvantaged if they are or have been eligible for means-tested free school meals or if they are or have been looked after by a local authority. Of the 7.0 million children aged 4–16 who are educated in publicly funded schools, 2.0 million (29%) 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’ is a key mechanism for transmitting poverty from one generation to the next.

2 The Department aims to improve the quality of education for all. However, it also aims to raise disadvantaged pupils’ attainment and reduce the gap between them and others. In 2011, the Department announced new funding for schools, the Pupil Premium, which specifically aims to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children.

3 Worth £2.5 billion in 2014-15, the Pupil Premium is distributed to schools by the Department according to their number of disadvantaged pupils. The Department expects schools to use the funding to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve more but schools can decide how to spend it. Schools are held to account for their decisions through Ofsted inspections, published Pupil Premium statements and exam results. School autonomy makes variation in the use of the Pupil Premium and the outcomes it achieves inevitable, while at the same time making good oversight and effective dissemination of best practice essential.

4 Besides Pupil Premium funding, the Department requires local authorities to use deprivation as a factor when allocating core funding to schools. In 2014-15, local authorities distributed £2.4 billion to schools on this basis. In total, in that year, the Department gave schools £41.5 billion of revenue funding for pupils aged 4 to 16.

5 To help schools use the Pupil Premium effectively, the Department encourages school leaders and teachers to use evidence of what works. To increase the amount of evidence and encourage its use, the Department has provided a new research charity, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), with grants of £137 million to be spent over 15 years.

Our report

6 This report evaluates the Department’s implementation of the Pupil Premium policy to date and how well schools use the funding. We have excluded from our analysis:

- the Service Premium, for supporting the children of armed forces personnel, whose needs differ from pupils’ with socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds; and
- the Early Years Pupil Premium, introduced this year for children aged 3 and 4.

7 We have not audited specific actions by schools or local authorities. Our audit approach is in Appendix One and our evidence base is in Appendix Two.

Coverage of this report

Part One: Establishing the Pupil Premium	What is the attainment gap?
	What is the Pupil Premium?
	Do the Pupil Premium and other school funding follow assessed need?
	What is the system of accountability, support and oversight for the Pupil Premium?
Part Two: Schools’ provision for disadvantaged pupils	Are schools supporting disadvantaged pupils effectively?
	Do schools use evidence to support best practice?
	Do accountability arrangements incentivise schools to support disadvantaged pupils effectively?
Part Three: Impact	Is the Pupil Premium improving disadvantaged pupils’ attainment?
	Is the Pupil Premium achieving other impacts?

Key findings

Allocating funding

8 The Department distributes the Pupil Premium using a clear formula to achieve a specific purpose but identifying disadvantaged pupils is an issue.

The Department gives schools a fixed sum for each disadvantaged pupil, in effect redistributing funding towards schools with more disadvantaged intakes. The Department has communicated clearly that the money is to reduce the attainment gap by raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. The current method for identifying individual disadvantaged pupils is good enough to find most but not all of them. The Department estimates that 11% of eligible pupils do not currently receive free school meals because their parents do not claim the entitlement and 75% of school leaders in our survey reported that some pupils from low-income backgrounds were ineligible. The introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals and Universal Credit, a system which unifies benefits, may make it more difficult comprehensively and consistently to identify all disadvantaged pupils. The Department continues to monitor the former and is considering how to resolve issues arising from the latter (paragraphs 1.5 to 1.14).

9 Other real-terms reductions in school funding mean the Pupil Premium has not always increased school budgets.

Over the last four years, the Department has given £6.0 billion to schools under the Pupil Premium policy but reduced other school funding in real terms at the same time. As a result total per-pupil funding has increased in 55% of schools in real terms, but it has decreased in real terms in the remainder. Some schools with very disadvantaged intakes have less money per pupil now, in real terms, than in 2010, despite the extra funding provided by the Pupil Premium. We estimate that the per-pupil funding of 16% of the most disadvantaged secondary schools fell by more than 5% in real terms between 2010-11 and 2014-15 (paragraphs 1.25 to 1.27).¹

10 Some schools receive higher core funding to reflect deprivation but local arrangements vary widely and schools do not have to spend the money specifically to alleviate disadvantage.

The Department distributes core funding to local authorities on the basis of an old formula that gives some parts of the country more than others. In 2015-16 it is providing an extra £390 million to the most underfunded parts of the country. Local authorities distribute funding to schools through formulae they determine themselves. In 2013-14, the Department restricted the number of variables local authorities could use in their formulae, which must include an adjustment for deprivation. However, the proportion of core funding schools receive from local authorities for disadvantaged pupils still varies substantially (from 2% to 20% between areas) and the Department does not require schools to give an account of how they use this money to support disadvantaged pupils (paragraphs 1.20 to 1.24).

¹ 'Most disadvantaged schools' – top quartile schools by percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. This analysis is based on published Consistent Financial Reporting data. The available data covers maintained schools only and includes all grant funding received by secondary schools with sixth forms.

Spending the Pupil Premium

11 Introducing the Pupil Premium has increased school leaders' focus on improving outcomes for disadvantaged children. Of school leaders, 57% said they targeted support at disadvantaged pupils before the creation of the Pupil Premium, compared with 94% now (paragraph 3.9).

12 Many schools spend some of the Pupil Premium on approaches that may not be cost-effective, based on current evidence, reducing the funding's impact. Most schools use some interventions that are effective under the right conditions. For example, 72% of schools provide individual tuition, which experts rate highly effective but relatively costly; 63% have sought to improve feedback between teachers and pupils, which is both effective and low-cost. However, 71% of schools employ extra teaching assistants to support disadvantaged pupils, a high-cost approach which will only improve results if schools learn to deploy these staff more effectively. We estimate that schools' spending on teaching assistants has increased by £430 million between 2011 and 2013 alone. Schools also use some effective, low-cost interventions too infrequently: just 25% are using peer-to-peer learning (paragraphs 2.6, 2.7 and 2.12).

13 Schools make different choices about which pupils to target Pupil Premium activities on; this freedom brings benefits but there is a risk that some disadvantaged pupils miss out on the full benefit of the funding.

- 47% of schools use the Pupil Premium to support pupils with special educational needs. This can be appropriate, but there is a risk the Pupil Premium replaces, rather than supplements, separate special educational needs funding (paragraph 2.5).
- 32% of schools do not provide additional support to disadvantaged pupils who are already identified as 'able' (meaning likely to meet minimum attainment targets). This is in spite of evidence that, without support, such pupils often fall behind equally able peers (paragraph 2.3).
- 77% of schools use some Pupil Premium for activities that are designed to support all pupils rather than just those who are disadvantaged. This can be cost-effective but there is a risk of diluting the funding's impact, particularly in the 15% of schools with fewer than 1 in 5 disadvantaged pupils that mainly use funding in this way (paragraph 2.4).

14 Some schools in deprived areas struggle to compete for high-quality teachers, who are likely to have the biggest impact on reducing the consequences of disadvantage. Of school leaders in deprived schools, 54% said attracting good teachers was a major barrier to improving pupils' performance, compared with just 33% of those in more affluent areas. In our survey, few schools (4%) reported using higher salaries to attract better teachers to support disadvantaged pupils (paragraphs 2.8 to 2.11).

Increasing schools' use of evidence

15 The Department has made a major contribution to strengthening the evidence base for what works to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress. The Department has invested £137 million over 15 years in the EEF to develop and spread evidence of what works. Since 2011, the EEF has summarised and published existing best practice in its Teaching and Learning toolkit, while commissioning a number of new research projects. Of these, 36 have been published so far. The Department, the EEF and other key stakeholders agree that many gaps in the evidence base remain and this will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future (paragraphs 1.16, 2.13 and 2.15 to 2.17).

16 Schools are increasingly using the EEF's outputs. Some 64% of school leaders now use the Teaching and Learning toolkit to inform decisions about Pupil Premium funding, up from 36% who used research in 2012. Most schools find the toolkit useful but some told us it needs to be more specific about which interventions should be used in which circumstances. Neither the Department nor the EEF knows the relative weight that school leaders and teachers place on EEF outputs compared to other sources of information, such as past experience and word of mouth (paragraphs 2.14 and 2.15).

Oversight and Accountability

17 Parents of disadvantaged pupils are unlikely to hold a school to account for the use of the Pupil Premium – something that the Department has sought to encourage – but governors typically do challenge school leaders on its use. Schools must publish annual statements of how they use the Pupil Premium but we estimate only one-third fully complied with reporting requirements in 2015 and only 24% of parents in lower socio-economic groups, the principal intended audience, had heard of the policy. School leaders have identified that parental engagement is a significant barrier to improvement for these pupils. In the first year of the Pupil Premium, Ofsted was concerned that governing bodies were insufficiently focused on its use. Inspection reports indicate subsequent improvement, with governors' oversight assessed positively in two-thirds of inspections between September and December 2014 and negatively in only one-tenth (paragraphs 2.22 to 2.26).

18 Ofsted inspections incentivise schools to focus on disadvantaged pupils but can be infrequent, and the Department's main intervention to address poor performance is weak. Ofsted, the independent inspector of schools, reviews the progress of disadvantaged pupils during each inspection. Our review found that Ofsted identified poor provision for disadvantaged pupils in 8% of primary schools and 21% of secondary schools between September and December 2014. Around 80% of school leaders see inspection as an effective mechanism to hold them to account for disadvantaged pupils' performance. But Ofsted does not routinely schedule inspections on the basis of these pupils' performance and long, potentially indefinite, intervals can occur between inspections. Ofsted recommends that ineffective schools commission an external Pupil Premium review, the Department's main intervention to address problems at the level of the individual school. But this is optional and approved reviewers are in short supply. Until February 2015, only 7 of 214 approved reviewers were in the South-West of England. The Department is addressing the shortage. There are currently 526 reviewers nationwide, including 34 in the South-West (paragraphs 2.27 to 2.32).

19 The Department reviews pupil outcomes but does not routinely monitor early-warning signs of success or failure. The Department uses attainment data to monitor how well schools are supporting disadvantaged pupils. It writes to schools where pupils are performing particularly well or poorly. However, pupil attainment lags behind schools' decisions about the Pupil Premium. Ofsted summary reports provide some insight into schools' decisions but the Department does not routinely monitor schools' Pupil Premium statements or the quality or contents of Pupil Premium reviews. Consequently, it does not fully understand how funding is being used, limiting its ability to share best practice or respond to risks on an informed basis (paragraphs 2.24, 2.28 to 2.31).

Impact

20 The attainment gap has narrowed slowly since 2011 but the gap remains wide and it will take time for the Pupil Premium's impact to become clear. Success in some schools indicates that the Pupil Premium has promise. However, the Department does not expect the full impact of funding to be felt until 2018 for primary schools and 2023 for secondary schools – the years, respectively, when eligible pupils will have been funded for their entire education. Changing exam standards make analysing the attainment gap difficult at this early stage. Between 2011 and 2014 the gap reduced by 4.7 percentage points in primary schools. In secondary schools, it reduced by 1.6 percentage points, although exam standards were measured differently in 2014. A clear trend has not yet been established and the gap remains wide – in 2014 some 63.5% of disadvantaged pupils failed to achieve five good GCSEs including English and Maths, compared with 36% of their peers (paragraphs 3.2 to 3.9).

21 The Department has not yet been specific enough about how it will judge whether the Pupil Premium has succeeded. As a matter of policy, the Department does not establish targets, however, in this context, it has not yet set out, either internally or externally, how it will assess whether the Pupil Premium has achieved a significant impact. To do so it will need to take into account factors affecting disadvantaged pupils' attainment that are outside schools' control. Beyond attainment, the Department will also need to assess whether disadvantaged pupils' destinations after school are improving, if improved results are reliably to lead to longer-term positive outcomes (paragraphs 1.7, 1.8, 3.10 and 3.11).

Conclusion on value for money

22 It will take time for the full impact of the Pupil Premium to be known. 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. If these schools' early performance can be sustained and built upon, the Pupil Premium has the potential to bring about a significant improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and the value for money of school spending.

23 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.

Recommendations

- a The Department should develop its understanding of how schools are using the Pupil Premium and take further steps to reduce schools' use of ineffective, costly activities to support disadvantaged pupils, including by:**
- improving the dissemination and usage of best practice;
 - ensuring that all Pupil Premium reviews are conducted by approved reviewers and considering whether to make reviews mandatory; and
 - examining, with the EEF, whether and how to expand the evidence base more quickly.
- b As it sets core funding for schools in future, the Department should use a fairer formula so that pupils across England receive similar funding, related more closely to their needs and less affected by where they live.** It should work with local authorities to understand the impact of core funding allocated to schools on the basis of disadvantage and consider how schools could be held accountable for its use. It should also clarify instructions to schools about the total value of funding that ought to be available to disadvantaged pupils with special educational needs, and explore how it can identify disadvantaged pupils more effectively.
- c The Department should be more specific about how it will measure the Pupil Premium's impact, including by:**
- setting out as soon as possible the attainment metrics it will use and ensuring these continue to be measured in a comparable way until at least 2023; and
 - researching how other potential Pupil Premium impacts, such as the destinations of disadvantaged pupils and savings in terms of other public services, can be measured.

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