

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE - PUPIL PREMIUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the Select Committee - Pupil Premium held in the Darent Room - Sessions House on Monday, 22 January 2018.

PRESENT: Mrs L Game, Mrs C Bell, Mrs P T Cole, Mrs T Dean, MBE and Dr L Sullivan

ALSO PRESENT:

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Romagnuolo (Research Officer - Overview and Scrutiny)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

**23. Matt Dunkley, Corporate Director, CYPE, Kent County Council
(Item 1)**

Matt Dunkley (Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education) was in attendance.

The Chair welcomed the guests to the Committee and a short introduction was given by Members.

Q – Please introduce yourself and provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities that your post involves.

Matt Dunkley had been the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education at Kent County Council since November 2017. Prior to that, he had a 34-year career in services for children – including 8 years as Director of Children’s Services for East Sussex County Council and, more recently, 9 months as DCS turning around Children’s Services in Norfolk County Council. Matt Studied and worked in the USA. He also worked for 4 years for the State Government of Victoria, Australia. Matt was President of the Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) in 2011-12, and was made a CBE for services to Children and Families in 2014.

Q – Please discuss the refreshed Kent’s Strategy for Vulnerable Learners.

Matt said that the Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee were considering the Kent Strategy for Vulnerable Learners in March 2018. The Committee were looking at whether Kent needed to re-calibrate priorities and highlight ways in which best practice could be measured. He said it was important to develop greater depth to the service offer and approach to identify groups who were very vulnerable. He said that Children’s Services were currently looking at what more could be done to tailor the approach to vulnerable groups to ensure

that a difference was made. He said that there were six overall priorities, this was the answer to what works:

1. **Aspirational Cultures: The relentless ambition to succeed** – Matt said that schools needed to develop several bespoke measures tailored to each school's circumstance.
2. **Individual Learning Pathways and Support** – Matt said to ensure that all learners succeed, learning programmes and activities needed to be personalised and supported by an individualised approach to addressing barriers to learning and emotional support.
3. **Parental Engagement and Involvement** – Through working with families, parents, carers and wider families, they would be involved in decision making and will be encouraged to actively be involved in children, young people and education.
4. **Leadership, Teaching and Learning** – Matt said it was important for schools to set high aspirations, devolve responsibility for raising achievement to all staff, and ensure that quality teaching was seen as a priority and teachers see every learner as an individual. It would be important for schools to close achievement gaps and build upon high quality teaching for all learners.
5. **Promoting Collaborations** – Matt said that it was important to develop more effective district collaborations, optimise the use of experiences and resources between schools and KCC services and therefore narrow achievement gaps for vulnerable learners.
6. **Evidence based use of resources** – Matt said that the tools and resources that had been developed would be used to monitor pupil progress more comprehensively and monitor the progress of specific strategies, so that schools respond quickly if the strategies for supporting vulnerable groups were not having sufficient impact. He said that the challenge was to push to schools and providers to make sure they are taking an evidence-based approach to get the outcomes desired.

Matt said that the six overall priorities were put in place with an aim to close gaps. He said that although the standards within Children's Services had improved significantly, not all groups were improving at the same pace, these groups were being closely monitored and supported. He said that development of Early Years Pupil Premium was key. It was important to ensure that learning gaps were closed from a young age as the younger a child is when they receive interventions the bigger impact you have.

In response to a question regarding school attendance, Matt said that attending school every day was very important and would affect the outcome of learning if a child was regularly absent. He said that the key aspect to ensuring high levels of attendance was a combination of working with the child to ensure they were offered an exciting, invigorating curriculum, and to work with the family to make

sure they were doing all that they could to support their children's attendance at school. He said that at a county level, it was important to work to create the conditions in which children will want to learn and engage in learning. He said that in circumstances of persistent absence, schools would reach out to pupil's homes to ensure that families were supported if they were experiencing troubles. KCC offers support to schools during this time, and Matt said that this support was very important and crucial. He said that Kent needed to make sure that they were doing all that they could as a county to ensure that schools were supported in making sure that parents were getting their children to school.

In response to a question regarding school visits from KCC support services, Matt said that pilots had been put in place to allow Early Help and Social Care teams to work with particular schools to support them with specific issues and spend time with them to work on transition issues. He said that he had hoped to share more information this year with regards to the new pilots.

In response to a question relating to the allocation of Pupil Premium, Matt felt that Free School Meals (FSM) was a reasonable proxy indicator but was obviously reliant on parents claiming eligibility for the schools to receive the additional funding. Many of the schools were confident that they had strategies in place to liaise with parents to make sure that they were claiming all benefits that they were entitled to. Schools were explaining to parents that it would benefit the school as well as the child if they could show their eligibility for FSM, even if their child did not eat the free meal provided. He said that there was a major issue with using attainment as an indicator. So, for example you could have pupils with low prior attainment attract Pupil Premium funding. However, Matt said that rewarding schools financially based on attainment could introduce perverse incentives.

Q – Have you picked up any new ways of working/experiences from working in other districts/councils?

Matt said that when working in Victoria, Australia, the State Government introduced a lump sum in their school funding formula which was associated with progress, so at the start of each key stage, students who had made poor progress would continue to receive the lump sum when they started secondary school due to there being a larger gap to close. He said that the strategy was in its' early stages and that it might be worth considering for Kent but would have to be on progress not attainment. He said he was keen to learn more about the way in which Kent approached closing the attainment gap. He said it sometimes proved challenging to manage tension between bespoke and personalised strategies but also promoting teaching and learning strategies, it can be a very difficult approach for schools. He said that schools had to have a detailed comprehensive teaching and learning strategy that was provided across the school, which judged levels of success with the most vulnerable students. He said that at the same time, it was important to acknowledge that not all children were the same, it needed to be personalised for each child.

In response to a question relating to progress measures in Victoria, Australia, Matt said two years ago it was decided that the extra money going into the formula would be used to support deprived and vulnerable students. A small

amount of money was invested into measuring prior attainment around the early childhood assessment for primary school children, and for secondary schools, the child had an assessment based on the progress that they had made through primary school. If the pupil failed to make expected progress, the child would be given a small lump sum for the next few years throughout secondary school.

Q – If Pupil Premium was used and a progress measure was considered, would the Pupil Premium money be ring-fenced to each child?

Matt said that legally that would not be something that Kent would be able to decide, that was for central government. He said that a national case could be made where the Pupil Premium funding in the National Funding Formula was supplemented to reduce some of the funding that was purely for deprivation and then have a portion of funding that was linked to progress. He said that he did not favour ring-fencing money to individual pupils. He said that schools should be able to allocate funding as they see fit, whilst taking into account the Pupil Premium funding.

Q – How can Kent County Council support children with challenging behaviours and their families with regards to school attendance and their behaviour in school?

Matt said it was important for children to feel safe, healthy and happy in school to allow them to be ready for learning each day. He said that the new Directorate is focused on eliminating the 'one size fits all' approach and making sure that all children in Kent had a good childhood. He said that the tools should be available to teachers and practitioners and handled in a way in which they see fit, this was why Pupil Premium funding needed to be seen as a whole, not tagged to individual children. By taking an integrated approach to supporting vulnerable children and families, the new Directorate is aiming to narrow the gap in outcomes for disadvantaged children.

Q - What more can KCC do, if anything, to improve the effectiveness of the Pupil Premium in raising the educational attainment of vulnerable pupils and in narrowing the attainment gap?

Matt said that Kent had developed toolkits for schools and were providing schools with best practice through the KELSI website, but this needed additional promotion. He said it would be interesting to see whether the creation of the Education Services Company would give Kent more flexibility on how schools were supported. He said that in Kent there was a challenge for providing school places, a higher proportion of vulnerable learners were in a school that is not rated Good or Outstanding, it was important to ensure that all schools were supported to address this issue. He said that there was much more work to be done with regards to High Needs Funding and Special Educational Needs provision. There were issues relating to secondary learning and emotional resilience, successful schools often worked around resilience. Kent were looking at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and health offer which would ensure that Kent were travelling towards a more school based and community based model. He said that Kent needed to ensure a whole package

was being provided to young people who experienced multiple disadvantages, for example young people who have housing difficulties, severe learning difficulties, carer responsibilities etc.

In response to a question regarding learner's engagement, Matt said there were many interesting models used by schools about how inclusive teaching involves effective, straight forward methods. This meant that students could receive more 'real time' feedback on their learning and progress. They were able to use online testing modules to allow them to assess their own progress and to understand the steps that needed to be taken to allow them to progress further.

In response to a question regarding different marking strategies for teachers and attainment, Matt said that it was important that support was provided, and that targets were set for individual students, he said that there was nothing more corrosive than lower expectations. He said that engagement of parents in secondary schools was more challenging and that some schools did not know when to engage parents, although this was not an excuse for lack of communication. He said that not all parents were willing or able to engage with schools, therefore some children needed time to complete homework in school hours due to family troubles, parenting issues etc. He said that all schools teach their students and engage with parents in a different way. There were processes and procedures in place to provide support for teachers to ensure that children were not educationally disadvantaged.

In response to a comment, Matt said that Pupil Premium children were generally doing very well in primary school, but their levels of progress generally drop in secondary school. The directorate needs to look at what it is about the transition from primary to secondary school that affects vulnerable learners and creates difficulty for them and what we can do to better support that transition.

24. Deborah Stanley, Headteacher, Maidstone Grammar School for Girls
(Item 2)

1. Mrs Game welcomed the Headteacher of Maidstone Grammar School for Girls; Deborah Stanley and the Select Committee Members to the Select Committee meeting to discuss Pupil Premium funding. She invited all those present to introduce themselves.
2. Deborah Stanley explained that she had been Headteacher at Maidstone Grammar School for Girls for almost 3 years and has the responsibility of day to day running of the school, of which 1,200 students are predominately girls. Deborah Stanley commented about her representation to Maidstone Grammar School for Girls, Maidstone Grammar School for Boys and Oakwood Park Grammar and went on to explain her role as part of Mid Kent teachers appeal for the 11+, where primary teachers put forward to a Panel pupils work and explained that Pupil Premium students were the area focus.
3. Deborah Stanley went on to explain that as of December 2017, 75 of those pupils are Pupil Premium in years 7-11 and another 18 in sixth form that

are going off to University. Deborah Stanley commented that the number of Pupil Premium students was at an average and stated that in East Kent there were more Pupil Premium students as opposed to West Kent that had less.

4. Q- It was asked for Mrs Stanley to clarify the schools bursary in sixth form.
5. Deborah Stanley commented that Pupil Premium students up to year 11 were allocated in a different way to sixth form students. EMA enable students to stay in education but the challenges of Pupil Premium were managed strategically under the same bracket as the bursary.
6. A member of the Panel asked about the Head Teachers appeal panel and what happened if a child missed a mark and what the range would be.
7. Deborah Stanley responded that it would be different to where you were located in Kent as there are more pressures on school places and a higher threshold in particular areas.
8. A member of the Panel continued the question previously by asking what the case would be if a child missed out on 5 or 10 marks.
9. Deborah Stanley explained that they would be looking at the individuals pass mark or what occurred on the day of the test; such as a family bereavement that may have affected their result. The consideration of Pupil Premium students would be taken in account but not automatically put through.
10. Deborah Stanley explained that their greatest challenge was the quality of evidence provided by the head Teacher at the primary school.
11. The Chair commented on how the school spend and track Pupil Premium funding.
12. Deborah Stanley explained that most of their Pupil Premium students were within Ever 6 and free school meals and were tracked as individuals. Each student would be given a number and this is logged onto a system to assess their money and what students spent and evaluate why. The DFE will contact parents if they are entitled to Pupil Premium upon checking data systems but this can be once the student has started at the school. Deborah Stanley raised concern that parents don't know that they are entitled to Pupil Premium and wanted to encourage the awareness. Pupil Premium funding covers the costs of books and additional resources that are recommended to all students; on free school meals or not within the Pupil Premium bracket will be given extra curriculum provision. Deborah Stanley researched that food technology and music were both subjects with hidden costs and students would need to fund themselves in order to get top grades but through their funding, the success on Pupil Premium students taking part in food technology had risen because they were provided with supermarket vouchers to purchase ingredients. Deborah

Stanley added that Pupil Premium students starting GCSE and A level's are provided with vouchers to Waterstones along with the ability to print homework in school, as this may be limited at home due to costs.

13. Q – A member of the Panel asked if the school didn't have the funding, what would the experiences to the students be and the difference it would make?
14. Deborah Stanley responded that before Pupil Premium there wasn't the money to fund revision resources or uniform but some support was used towards school trips.
15. Q- Do students know they are Pupil Premium if they are provided with vouchers?
16. Deborah Stanley commented that the vouchers go to the parent and not the child because it may be spent on other things despite what it's meant to be for.
17. Q – In response to Deborah Stanley, a member commented on whether has happened?
18. Deborah Stanley explained that it wasn't in the nature of the students and there has never been a problem. It was commented that they had to be careful as some parents do not want their children knowing they are Pupil Premium.
19. Q- A lot of what is provided are material goods rather than extra lessons, which is much more obvious to establish who has Pupil premium as there must be a dividing line. Students turning up in new uniform may become resented to those who may have uniform second hand, do girls turn up every year in a new uniform or do they blend in?
20. Deborah Stanley responded that they blend in due to the nature of the uniform; a blouse and skirt.
21. Q - Thinking about other people on that dividing line, is there any issues?
22. Deborah Stanley explained that occasionally there may be but it's spoken through with families to see if they may qualify. It was commented that parents may go years without knowing they are entitled to Pupil Premium and others that aren't as common are parents who lose their job and in that case, becomes an emergency.
23. Q –Do you try and work with primary schools about issues and what resources that you may require to establish Pupil Premium pupils? It's in your best interest that a primary school should do a good job on this.
24. Deborah Stanley commented the work isn't being done early enough at primary schools to encourage parents to register for the 11+. According to

Data, the percentage of Pupil Premium pupils who drop out of the 11+ is higher but the cohort of Pupil Premium pupils percentage is outran at head teacher appeals. Deborah Stanley explained that they hold activities within primary schools during the academic year to identify Pupil Premium students and their potential to take the 11+.

25. Q-Do you go to evening meetings at primary schools?

26. Deborah Stanley responded that they will always go if they are invited along.

27. Q- How do you track progress of Pupil Premium pupils in school?

28. Deborah Stanley explained that they track Pupil Premium pupils and that all staff members are aware who they are via registers and planners, so that they can gather extra recourses and revision material those students may require. Pupil Premium students along with other students have 1:1 sessions as appropriate that fit around the students time table to encourage extra curriculum. Students are monitored by senior staff if they think they're under achieving but in 2016 out of 7 Pupil Premium pupils, 4 went off to university and 3 went to employment. In 2017, out of 11 Pupil Premium pupils 7 went off to university, 1 did an apprenticeship, 1 went to college, 1 took a gap year and the other was unknown.

29. Q- In your school you get more parents who are engaged in their children's education. Those who are entitled to Pupil Premium but don't want to be labelled, do you have a lot of motivation from those students?

30. Deborah Stanley explained that they have a spread of pupils whose home life is destructive and their circumstances may be prohibited by a financial background. External agencies that are working with families may cause pupils to under achieve, or if there are problems outside the environment that prohibits a child from achieving.

31. Q- Does this happen with Pupil Premium pupils or across the board?

32. Deborah Stanley commented it was a general statement, across the board.

33. Q- Is attendance an issue?

34. Deborah Stanley responded that it followed in the same situation where finances, traumas, difficulties and multiple agencies involved can cause low attendance but this was irrelevant with Pupil Premium pupils.

35. Q- How do you get Pupil Premium pupils engaged?

36. Deborah Stanley explained that they promote at opening evenings and will support families through the process, such as providing uniform and helping with travel arrangements. Dependant on primary schools, getting

the message out can depend on the nature of the school, whether the Head Teacher is proactive and the Governors promote the 11+.

37. Q-Do you think that there are Head Teachers that believe children lack of experiences and prevents them from achieving?
38. Deborah Stanley commented that the Head Teacher or Governing body at primary schools may not be as encouraging as others.
39. Q –Do you think that the way Pupil Premium funding at your school has been effective in narrowing the attainment gap?
40. Deborah Stanley explained that there is a gap but it has got has smaller due to a number of factors: getting staff to know who the students are, providing support and tracking students 3 times a year. Tracking the number of sub groups such as Pupil Premium and those who have English as an additional language, as the school will look at these students and address concerns, such as providing students with revision books, printing homework and enabling them to go on enrichment trips.
41. Q- In Grammar schools, you will have Pupil Premium students who are bright and gifted but come to secondary and fail. Is this a big issue?
42. Deborah Stanley explained that as a group, they are performing below the cohort but the attainment gap has got smaller. If a student who was in difficult circumstances and did not attend school, then this would create a larger attainment gap. Deborah Stanley commented that all their students are bright and cope in the environment, which is evident in school and will achieve well as they head off to university.
43. Q – Do you know how common it is for transport to become an issue? And do you think this is a good idea?
44. Deborah Stanley commented that it would be good to encourage selective schools to offer transport as parents will look at the school next door because it's their local school; selective schools may go over that barrier.
45. Q- Do you think free school meals are the right criteria to use?
46. Deborah Stanley refereed to the Ever 6 and discussed her concern that parents aren't aware of their entitlements on free school meals in secondary school because during primary school, children have their meals provided. Parents are told to apply but will want their children to have packed lunch. The Literature of free school meals is appropriate.
47. Q- What is the set pass mark each year for the selection criteria?
- A- 106 in each paper (3 overall) and a total of 320 aggregate scoring.
48. Q- What is the 106 out of?

- A- 140 and it will be the top end of the distribution curve.
49. Q- If you have a primary school student is doing well but they aren't familiarised with the test. At what point can they come to a selective school?
A- Through the Head Teachers appeal.
50. If the pupil doesn't do well in the 11+, can they be taken to Head Teachers appeal?
51. Deborah Stanley explained that if a pupil's score is under 100 then a head teacher isn't meant to put in for appeal unless it's a particular case and external evidence is provided. The challenge would be the quality of work such as CATS test and books being the key things that are looked at. Children are asked to prepare a written creative task as this measures their ability to write sentences and use their imagination. Head Teacher panels are independent and have no connection with that child being assessed.
52. Q- Primary schools cannot coach or train but parents can still do this independently?
53. Deborah Stanley agreed.
54. Q - Students with good CATS scores going into year 7, can they apply to you?
55. Deborah Stanley commented that through casual admissions but parents do not know the result of the CATS test.
56. Q – Are Pupil Premium children likely to do better in CATS?
57. Deborah Stanley responded that in general Pupil Premium students have had the same preparation as other families.
58. The pass rate for the 11+ is 106, it has previously been higher. Has it made it better for Pupil Premium pupils?
59. Deborah Stanley commented that she couldn't comment as at the time of previous pass marks, they weren't tracking those children.
60. Q- Does the status of the school make a difference to the 11+ number? Particularly if this is something those schools should be encouraging.
61. Deborah Stanley explained that Academy or not, it didn't make a difference. There is no training or direction on how work should be prepared for the appeal panel. Visiting the year 7s in primary school will encourage the school to send through head teacher appeals and getting the message across to focus on those disadvantaged students can be tricky.

62. Q- Apart from that issue, can the Local Authority help you?
63. Deborah Stanley explained that there is a familiarisation issue and there are opportunities to visit selective schools, regardless of their potential outcome.
64. Q – If familiarisation doesn't happen, are primary schools able to mention the Kent test to parents?
65. Deborah Stanley responded that there was no consistency as it varied from school to school and parents have to register.
66. Q - Can schools make that decision?
67. Deborah Stanley commented that there is competition in primary schools to sell themselves, to get a percentage through to a selective school but parents make that decision to take the Kent test.
68. Q- Are Head Teachers likely to appeal some families and not others?
69. Deborah Stanley commented that if the Head Teacher feels a child is capable they can make a representation.

25. Appendix
(Item 3)