

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE - PUPIL PREMIUM

MINUTES of a meeting of the Select Committee - Pupil Premium held in the Wantsum Room - Sessions House on Monday, 29 January 2018.

PRESENT: Mrs L Game, Mr A Booth, Mrs P T Cole, Mrs T Dean, MBE, Ms S Hamilton, Mr J P McInroy and Dr L Sullivan

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Romagnuolo (Research Officer - Overview and Scrutiny), Mrs K Goldsmith (Research Officer - Overview and Scrutiny), Miss G Little (Democratic Services Officer), Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer) and Mr A Ballard (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. **Alex Gamby and Sue Smith, KCC**
(Item 1)

The Chair welcomed the guest to the committee and a short introduction was given by Members.

Q – Please introduce yourself and odder and outline of the roles and responsibilities that your post involves?

Alex Gamby (Head of Early Years and Childcare) and Sue Smith (Early Years and Childcare Equalities and Inclusion Manager) both from Kent County Council were in attendance for this item.

Q – Please can you explain why the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) was introduced and its main purpose?

The Early Years Pupil Premium was introduced in April 2015 to provide extra funding for 3 and 4-year-old children who had been in care or adopted from care, or for children whose parents were in receipt of certain benefits. The EYPP provides an additional £302 a year for any child who received 15 hours of the Early Education Entitlement.

Q – What strategies and interventions has the Early Years and Childcare Service employed in order to promote and support the attainment of vulnerable pupils in Kent.

KCC's Early Years and Childcare Service has supported this initiative by:

- providing up to date information at Early Years and Childcare Briefing and Networking Sessions and through termly (six times a year) Early Years and Childcare Bulletins
- identifying one member of the Early Years and Childcare Service's Equality and Inclusion Team to gather information and support when necessary, offering visits to settings in the early days of the funding
- providing a dedicated page on KELSI (please see link below) supporting settings to:
 - supporting settings to encourage parents to apply for this additional funding
 - looking at research and national information from organisations such as the Education Endowment Foundation
 - Gather and disseminate effective practice for using the EYPP

<http://www.kelsi.org.uk/early-years/equality-and-inclusion/early-years-pupil-premium>

- adding an EYPP filter on the Kent Progress Tracker
- developing an Intervention Tracker which will enable settings to identify which interventions are having the most significant impact (available from October 2017)
- monitoring Ofsted reports to identify when the use of additional funding is mentioned as a strength
- monitoring up take and FSM Early Years Foundation Stage Profile gap data

Q – To what extent has Early Years Pupil Premium funding been effective in narrowing the attainment gap between vulnerable children and their peers in Kent How does this compare to the national picture? Please provide data and figures.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data for 2017 is the first year that the EYPP funding will have been available for the children entitled to the funding. The FSM gap reduced from 20% to 10.1% in 2017 but it is impossible to directly attribute this reduction to the funding at this stage. Further analysis of the Kent districts with the most positive results will enable us to identify what has been put in place to make such a positive outcome.

Q - Is it all funded by KCC?

The government already provided extra funding for school-age children (Pupil Premium) and through the provision of free entitlement places for eligible two-year olds (approximately 40%). The EYPP ensured continuity of support from funded two year olds through to the schools pupil premium.

Free Early Education and Childcare can be delivered through a range of private and voluntary sector providers including childminders, childminders as part of a childminder agency, maintained schools with a nursery class

and independent schools. Section 9 of the Childcare Act 2006 gives KCC powers to ensure that any providers (except the governing bodies of maintained schools) with whom they enter into a financial agreement, meet the needs of the requirements imposed on them. It allows KCC to withdraw funding if providers fail to meet the contractual conditions contained within this agreement.

For two, three and four-year olds, KCC will fund places for children attending any provider including childminders rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted or fund places at any childminder registered with a childminding agency judged 'effective' by Ofsted if a parent wants their child to take up their free place at that provider. It will also fund providers newly registered with Ofsted, until their first full Ofsted inspection judgement is published. Providers are strongly encouraged to engage with KCC's quality improvement programme (or that of its agents) in order to ensure a 'good' judgement at their first inspection.

In terms of training, Kent CPD Online was part of KCC's offer to support the continuing professional development and training of the children's workforce. It is an online searchable directory and booking system for professional development and training opportunities. It is being developed to ensure Kent has a highly skilled and professional children's workforce, including multi-agency partners, able to support the achievement and development of all children and young people in Kent, particularly the most vulnerable in our society.

Q - Does KCC help with application?

The setting to which a child belongs will ask the parent to give permission for their eligibility to be checked when completing the parental declaration form if they wish to claim EYPP. The form states:

'I confirm that the details I have supplied are accurate and true. I give permission for the early years provider named in this agreement to complete an application for EYPP on my behalf.'

It is not compulsory to sign the EYPP part of the form but if the parent does not agree, the child's setting could lose out on £302 a year which could be used to support the child's individual learning.

Q – We never get the figures to where we want to be, is this due to financial pressures or more work that could be done with the parents?

Alex Gamby said that there was a national issue around the level of funding for free early education. The two-year-old staffing ratio was higher than that for three and four-year-olds. There was a campaign called 'Champagne Nurseries, Lemonade Funding' that aimed to raise awareness of the effects of the low funding rate for providers and the potential consequences of the

doubling of 'free hours' from 15 to 30 per week for eligible children. The campaign asked the Government to consider fairer funding for all providers and establish a system that would support parents.

The Early Years and Childcare Service Markets Free Entitlements however local outreach was the responsibility of the children centres. The committee was reminded that whilst eligible parents were targeted, there would still be available places not used as some parents chose to remain at home with their children.

Q – How are you engaged with those parents in the more affluent areas to ensure all children are given equal opportunity?

Alex Gamby informed the committee that work around local outreach for the free entitlement for two year olds sat within the remit of Children Centres in Early Help. The Children centres encouraged eligible parents to take up their entitlement. Health visitors also explained to them how the entitlement works and how they could apply for it.

The Early Years and Childcare Service's, Enhancing Family Involvement in Children's Learning (EFICL) toolkit was an award winning product that contained a range of resources that helped practitioners evaluate their practice but also put into place new strategies to increase and enhance the involvement of families in their children's learning.

Integral to the EFICL Toolkit is the free Smarterplay APP which helped parents to access ideas, resources and locations to explore with their children.

In terms of the costs, settings in more affluent areas meant that premises costs were likely to be higher, as the cost of living and staffing costs.

Q – What is an acceptable distance for parents to travel

Alex Gamby advised the committee that the government used the term 'pram-pushing distance'. A common issue however is that parents within the same community wanted their children to go to the same pre-school or nursery and there may not always be sufficient vacancies in that specific setting. Anecdotal evidence indicated that parents would often rather wait for a space to become available within their opted choice rather than have their child attend an alternative setting. Some families preferred that their children remained at home.

Q – is there flexibility within the system to offer parents a trial of that centre or give them the option to attend just one morning a week?

Alex Gamby said that a child could take up any proportion of the free entitlement. Sue Smith added that whilst best practice would suggest that most settings advise a minimum of 2 sessions, there was flexibility offered to parents.

Q - How are you addressing the hard to reach communities, in particular, the Romany and Gypsy communities?

Alex Gamby assured the committee that all programmes were wholly inclusive but sometimes more targeted activity was require.

Inclusion Support Service Kent (ISSK) is a traded service which provides specialist support, training, advice, coaching and mentoring to schools, settings and professionals working with children, young people and communities.

The main focus is on raising the achievement and improving the engagement, wellbeing and inclusion of vulnerable learners specifically Minority Ethnic pupils, Gypsies, Roma or Travellers and those with English as an additional language (EAL).

Research shows that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) children are most at risk in the education system, they continue to have the lowest achievement and attendance of any ethnic group in all key stages across schools in Kent.

Over the past few years there has been an improvement, but the gap was still unacceptable and significantly high.

ISSK incorporates The Virtual School for GRT pupils. They provide advice and guidance for teaching and support staff to help raise the achievement and inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people in our schools and settings. We can also advise on parental and community engagement.

Q - is there anything that can improve the effectiveness of closing the attainment gap?

Alex Gamby said that recruitment and retention within the Early Years and Childcare workforce remained a huge challenge. Instead of using £302 for one child, settings and collaborations could combining the funding thus allowing more flexibility in terms of what could be done with the money to enhance the children's Early Years experience.

Q - What are parents advised to use with their children at home?

- Sing nursery rhymes
- put mobile phone away and have face to face conversation with parent.
- Smarterplay app for parents

Q - on a global issue Kent is seen as 'dumping ground' for different ethnic groups, a range of socio-economic groups and has its

troubles with cohesion. How will Kent become the figure head and how will this be implemented long term?

Alex Gamby said that the quality of Early Years provision in Kent was moving between 97-98%, and that they were ahead of the national figure.

Within Gillie Heath's team and the Early Years and Childcare service – support is offered to ensure children are being fully included regardless of their ethnic backgrounds or socioeconomic group. They are encouraging settings not to line boys and girls up separately and offered training in diversity, as well as literature and books on same sex families. The team treated every family, whatever their configuration, equally to ensure best possible outcomes.

Q – If you had £1000 per child what would you do?

- Increase the hourly rate for all free entitlements
- Support settings to release staff to attend the training, .
- Have a skilled practitioner to go into each setting and model the learning required within the workplace
- 65% of providers work in collaborations. Support more settings to join a collaboration
- A pilot launched in Dover Grammar Schools was encouraging young people to become communication champions. Those taking part were developing a greater awareness of the importance of speech and language particularly as they were contemplating a career in childcare, it would also support them if they become parents in the future. If this proves successful, then the programme would hopefully be rolled out across the county.

Q – How is Ofsted involved in Early Years and Childcare?

Ofsted should review each setting and ask how the funding contributed to the effectiveness of the setting however this was not consistently applied.

2. Julie Miles, Manager, Discovery Day Nursery & Christine Robinson, Early Years and Childcare Equality and Inclusion Adviser, KCC
(Item 2)

(1) The Chairman welcomed Julie Miles and Christine Robinson to the meeting and invited them to introduce themselves.

(2) Julie Miles said that she had worked for some 30 years in the field of childcare. She was now the Manager of the Discovery Day Nursery in Parkwood in Maidstone, which had a staff complement of 10. She was interested in everything related to children's education, particularly in relation to SEN.

(3) Christine Robinson had started working for KCC in 1973, specialising in work with Young Children and gaining expertise in deprivation, refugees and pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). She had also worked the Equality and Inclusion Advisor for KCC's Early Years Team since 2004.

(4) Julie Miles said that the Discovery Day Nursery had some 100 children on roll with an age range of 2 to 4. The two-year olds had their own room. All 37 of them were in receipt of Free for 2 funding. Only 23 of the 3 and 4-year olds, however, were eligible for the EY Pupil Premium. Their parents completed a form including their NI Numbers on a termly basis, ensuring that all those eligible could receive it.

(5) Christine Robinson said that the criteria for Free for 2 funding was broader than for the EY Pupil Premium. The crucial differences in eligibility were that those with an EHC Plan or a Disability Living Allowance were automatically eligible for Free for 2 funding, whereas they were not eligible in respect of the EY Pupil Premium.

(6) Julie Miles explained that each child eligible for the EY Pupil Premium received £103 per term. This funding tended to arrive late on in the term. For example, the funding for the Autumn Term 2017 had not been received until November.

(7) Julie Miles then described the process which took place when children were newly admitted to the Nursery. Staff members would initially carry out home visits, enabling them to take note of the home circumstances and identify any areas of concern. This was a crucial aspect of the Nursery's work as there were currently 20 children with safeguarding concerns, 23 EAL pupils and 20 who had difficulties in using language skills, which could be caused by parental neglect or ignorance. One three-year old pupil had arrived still using a dummy. Other problems were due to bottles which contained tea, coke or alcohol leading, in extreme cases, to them having their teeth removed. Some parents did not encourage their children to speak. The Nursery was attached to a local Children's Centre which could offer support such as the "Chatter Matters" course, helping both the children and their parents.

(8) The Nursery made use of the "Early Talk Boost" programme which had been established by the I CAN charity in 2014. This was a 9-week programme of small group intervention which taught 3 and 4-year old children new words and sentences. A progress tracker was employed. The cost was £520 excluding books. The success of this EY Pupil Premium funded course could best be seen by the example of a boy who had language delay when he arrived but was age-appropriate for his reading and literacy skills by the time he went to school.

(9) There were no set criteria stating how the EY Pupil Premium should be spent. One girl with a single mother had needed to be placed in emergency accommodation in Chatham. She had, however, been making such good progress at the Nursery that she came in by bus in order to continue to attend. In her case, the EY Pupil Premium was used to pay for tea when she came to the Nursery.

(10) The father of one of the boys had EAL. He had asked the Nursery if he could buy school books from the available supply of dual language books (Albanian, Polish, Russian, Latvian). The EY Pupil Premium had paid for a mantra lingua pen. This was a device which could also speak 21 languages. If the child was reading a story about the Gingerbread Man, the pen could translate the story into Polish, enabling the family to read the book together. If asked, mantra lingua pens could also be used for translation when grandparents who could not speak English came to the School. The pens could be purchased for £80.

(11) Julie Miles replied to a question by explaining that a progress tracker was used to monitor the children's progress at the Nursery. This included any support given by the Children's Centre. The data was then passed on to the Primary School when the child transferred.

(12) The Nursery was the feeder for 11 local primary schools, and helped to prepare the children for transfer. The letter informing parents which School their child would be attending was sent to parents in March. Pictures and uniforms were then brought in, and the Nursery would invite future teachers to meet the children, also involving the parents.

(13) Julie Miles said that typically, EAL children would stay in the Parkwood area for about 5 years. Other families would stay there for generations. This had led to the development of low expectations. One of the roles of the Nursery was to embed aspirations in the children and, by extension, in their parents.

(14) Julie Miles then said that staff undertaking the initial home visit would ask many questions. They would see whether the children rolling or crawling, or at what age they had begun to walk. They would also ask whether they had had their 2-year health check (about a third of the families would reply that they had not).

(15) Christine Robinson described some of the difficulties experienced in Kent as a whole. There had been an 18 month in Dover for children to receive speech and language therapy. Parents could be resistant to utilising Early Help because they felt stigmatised if they did. Whenever a child was referred for speech and language therapy, parents were required to attend a workshop beforehand. If they did not, the case would be closed.

(16) Christine Robinson replied to a question on what she would ideally like KCC to do to help. *She had brought detailed notes with her in preparation for this question, which are appended to these minutes. She picked out some of the details as set out in the following paragraphs.*

(17) Christine Robinson said that only 47% of children eligible for EYPP funding actually received it. The different eligibility criteria for free for 2 funding and the EYPP led to a lack of stability in planning. The funding was paid in arrears and had not gone up since 2015 and was often insufficient to meet all of the child's needs. Support Was needed around EAL for translated information in order to improve EYPP take up. Evidence provided by settings indicated that many parents refused to disclose their benefits because they believed their financial status would be used against them.

(18) Christine Robinson then turned to the question of the positive steps that could be taken. She said it was necessary to improve technology* so that there could be a seamless transition between Free for 2 and EYPP funding and ideally the Pupil Premium in school. If an 'opt-out' rather than an 'opt-in' system were introduced, pupils would automatically receive the funding they were entitled to. She believed that the claiming process could be co-ordinated by the County Council. County-wide publicity would also improve take-up, particularly if it was readily available in other languages. The best overall use of the EYPP funding would be for settings to provide additional staffing to support children's language development and well-being.

*Synergy is the name of the digital system used to process the free early education entitlement.

3. Chris Millins, Manager, Manor Road Pre-School & Barbara Hall, Early Years and Childcare Equality and Inclusion Adviser, KCC
(Item 3)

1. The Chairman welcomed the two guests; Chris Millins and Barbara Hall to the Select Committee meeting and invited all those present to introduce themselves.

2. Barbara Hall explained that she had been an advisor for Kent Early Years over the last 17 years. Within the Equality and Inclusions team, she had a specialism in communication and language. Most recently this had led to her leading projects working with a communication charity I CAN. Within the Equality and Inclusion team, all members are trained and qualified I CAN Licensees who can deliver I CAN training packages., and she also works closely with speech and language therapists. She explained that she had a passion for supporting with children's communication and language and was soon to be qualified as a Makaton. Makaton is a language programme which uses signing and symbols.

3. Chris Millins advised Members that she had worked for the Pre-School for the past 35 years and been manager for the last 25. She explained that she was very passionate about her role which dealt with the day to day management of staff, supervision and training. Children were monitored through a Tapestry system and she was responsible for the development and processing in all areas. YIPP was used to help develop each of the children's learning.

4. The Chairman asked how many children the pre-school taught? Chris Millins confirmed they had 49 and went on to explain that when the Pre-school was first opened, they had 12 children without any funding. The Pre-school has a community feel with good relationships with the church. They operate a pack away system in the church hall so all staff members arrive at 7.45am to set up for a 9am start and packed away at the end of the day. Equipment had been purchased through EYPP funding in addition to community fundraising. They recently had an outstanding OFSTED inspection.

5. The Chairman queried out of the 49 at the pre-school how many were entitled to EY Pupil Premium? Chris Millins stated 8 children.

6. The Chairman asked if the additional funding was enough to cover some of the equipment that was required? Chris Millins commented that the funds did not always cover larger equipment that was sometimes required. A package called 'I CAN Early Talk Boost had been purchased the previous year, which had been an effective tool in reducing attainment gaps. Chris Millins demonstrated to the Panel a number of small items that were affordable which helped with areas such as physical writing skills, which many children had benefited from.

7. The Chairman referred to the comment relating to narrowing the attainment gap and asked if this had been identified through a progress tracker? Chris Millins explained that they mainly used Tapestry to track progress but had also used that system. At the end of each month they would go through all the key development needs, and worked with the children who had been identified as needing further support.

8. Barbara Hall commented that using the I CAN Early Talk Boost intervention programme often saw on average children making six months progress. As part of a trial they undertook using the Kent Intervention tracker, to measure the effectiveness of I CAN Early Talk Boost. the children who had taken part in the programme had made on average, the expected six months progress. The nursery where the trial took place also uses Leuven Scales to measure children's levels of wellbeing and involvement. Over the course of the intervention programme these levels were raised showing the impact was not just on attainment but also on children's confidence and self-esteem.

9. Chris Millins made the Panel aware that the examples given above could all be noted on the Tapestry system which parents were able to view electronically.

10. Mr Booth asked if the 'I Can Talk' series was a subscription based package or a one off payment? Barbara Hall clarified it being a one off payment

to purchase all the materials for a 9 week programme. There were activities each week for those children who had been identified, with story books and various other resources. Barbara Hall went on to explained that although the initial outlay could be expensive, apart from having to replace some books, once it had been purchased it could be repeatedly. They would not have been able to use this facility without the extra funding.

11. Mr Booth was interested with reference to the 8 children who had been identified, whether that money was specifically for them and what success stories had been identified? Chris Millins read out a letter from a parent whose child had benefited through the 'I Can Early Talk Boost' programme. One of the activities within this series was a story book with the main character being a tiger. The tiger was represented as a finger puppet which the child could take home. Its purpose was designed to develop Children's 'Listening, Attention and Communication Skills'. Although purchased for a group of children it was a resource which would benefit other children.

12. Dr Sullivan asked if it could be used as a resource the following year, or if a new payment would have to be made? Chris Millins clarified that it was a one-off payment which came with 10 books and was aimed for children who had delayed language.

13. The Chairman asked how affective the adoption of free school meals had been as a measure of disadvantage to determine eligibility of children with EYP? Chris Millins advised that it was not relevant for early years.

14. The Chairman enquired what strategies and/or interventions if any could be implemented to maximise the impact to the EYP? Chris Millins felt that the application process had been one of the main issues. The use of Synergy had been very useful which had allowed letters to be sent out each term to explain the process to parents and encouraged to complete EYPP section on their Declaration forms. Reverting to a system where the parents had to apply could result in funds not being allocated to children who were entitled. Good relationships with parents went a long way.

15. Mrs Game commented that they had previously heard that schools with fewer eligible children found it harder to purchase larger items and could result in a big difference in progress with bigger gaps between more able to the least able. She went on to ask if they found EY Pupil Premium children made progress and caught up? Chris Millins felt that all their children made progress due to the large amount of equipment that they had. They had heavily relied on community fundraising in addition to the extra funding.

16. The Chairman asked if they agreed that there should be more funding for the early years stage? Barbara Hall explained that research behind early intervention was extensive and there had been a report called Cost to the Nation. This had been commissioned from 'I CAN which outlined the cost to the nation of children with poor communication and language skills. It not only detailed the long term implications but also looked at the social cost. The evidence confirmed that more interventions for younger ages made more economic sense.

17. Mr Booth asked if they had three wishes what would they be and how KCC could assist them? Chris Millins only wish was to be able to provide resources to all their children to help develop their progress without having to worry about fundraising.

18. Mr Booth asked how much they had been able to fundraise?? which Chris Millins confirmed approximately £1200.

19. The Chairman thanked both Chris Millins and Barbara Hall for their valued input into the session and for answering Members questions.