

By: Gaetano Romagnuolo, Research Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)

To: Pupil Premium Select Committee – 12 October 2017

Subject: Pupil Premium Select Committee Topic Review

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To discuss and agree proposed Terms of Reference, Scope and general approach for the Review

1 Introduction

One of the key ambitions of Kent County Council is for Kent to be a place where families thrive and where all children and young people develop well and are equipped for achievement in life.

Education is the greatest opportunity young people have to achieve life-long benefits but at present the life chances of some are greater than those open to others, as social and economic conditions determine more than ever a child's success in the education system and labour market.

Although the school system alone cannot solve the issue of low social mobility, it can make a significant contribution to improving the life outcomes of disadvantaged children.

The introduction of the Pupil Premium in 2011 provided schools with additional funding for disadvantaged pupils with the aim of improving their academic achievement and narrowing the attainment gap between them and their peers. Although the schooling system in Kent is performing generally well, gaps in educational achievement for pupils supported by the Pupil Premium - such as children in receipt of free school meals and Looked After Children - remain too wide.

KCC, as a champion and advocate for all children, young people and families in Kent, aims to ensure that there is high quality support to improve the life prospects of vulnerable pupils in the County. The Pupil Premium Select Committee has been set up to investigate the impacts of the Pupil Premium, and to inform policies aimed at narrowing the attainment gap and at helping disadvantaged children and young people achieve the educational and life outcomes they deserve.

2 Committee Membership

The Select Committee consists of nine elected Members of Kent County Council:

Mrs Clair Bell (Conservative)

Mr Andy Booth (Conservative)

Mrs Penny Cole (Conservative)

Mrs Trudy Dean (Liberal Democrat)

Mrs Lesley Game (Conservative)

Ms Sarah Hamilton (Conservative)

Mr James McInroy (Conservative)

Dr Lauren Sullivan (Labour)

Mr Mike Whiting (Conservative)

3 Draft Terms of Reference

1. To contextualise the Pupil Premium and to identify the groups of vulnerable learners who are currently supported by the Pupil Premium in Kent.
2. To assess the extent to which the Pupil Premium is currently effective in closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in Kent.
3. To identify best practice interventions and strategies where the Pupil Premium has been used successfully to narrow the attainment gap between vulnerable learners and their peers.
4. To recommend initiatives and strategies to improve the effectiveness of the Pupil Premium in raising the educational achievement of disadvantaged learners and in narrowing the attainment gap in Kent.

4 Draft Scope

The complexity of this topic and the tight timeframe of the review require a clear and focused approach. Possible key themes and aspects to be covered by the review are detailed below:

- 1. To contextualise the Pupil Premium and to identify the groups of vulnerable learners who are supported by the Pupil Premium in Kent.**
 - a. To define and contextualise the Pupil Premium, the Early Years Pupil Premium and the Pupil Premium Plus as school funding policies.
 - b. To identify the groups of vulnerable learners who are currently supported by the Pupil Premium in Kent.

- 2. To assess the extent to which the Pupil Premium is currently effective in closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in Kent.**
 - a. To examine how the Pupil Premium is allocated, and whether it is currently used to support the children in Kent who need it the most.
 - b. To assess the extent to which the Pupil Premium is closing the attainment gap between vulnerable learners and their peers at every academic Key Stage in Kent.

- 3. To identify best practice interventions and strategies where the Pupil Premium has been used successfully to narrow the attainment gap between vulnerable learners and their peers.**
 - a. To identify best practice examples of Kent primary and secondary schools that have successfully used the Pupil Premium to narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.
 - b. To explore best practice interventions and strategies in other local authorities in England where the Pupil Premium is closing the attainment gap between vulnerable learners and their peers.

- 4. To recommend initiatives and strategies to improve the effectiveness of the Pupil Premium in raising the educational achievement of disadvantaged learners and in narrowing the attainment gap in Kent.**

5 Proposed Timetable (summary)

Late September 2017	Informal cross-party meeting for Committee to discuss the Terms of Reference of the review
12 October 2017	First meeting of Select Committee, to appoint the Chair and to discuss and agree the Terms of Reference of the review
October 2017	Arrangements for hearing sessions, site visits, written evidence and other evidence gathering methods
November 2017	Hearings and possible visits
Late November 2017	Committee meets to identify key issues and to make recommendations
December 2017	Report writing, production of first draft
Early January 2018	Committee discusses the first draft of the report and suggests amendments. Amendments carried out accordingly
Late January 2018	Select Committee share the draft report with Cabinet Member(s) and Corporate Director(s)
Mid February 2018	Select Committee to agree the final report
Mid February 2018	Report shared with relevant boards (by email)
Mid February 2018	Despatch for Cabinet Members' Meeting
Late February 2018	Report presented to Cabinet Members' Meeting
8 March 2018	Despatch for County Council
16 March 2018	Report presented to County Council

6 General Approach

The review is proposed to include a short period of desk-based research. Oral and written evidence will be obtained during the course of the review. Site visits may also be organised.

7 Evidence Gathering – Hearings

It is proposed that a number of hearing sessions of 45 minutes each will take place in November 2017. Hearings will normally be open to the public unless there is a specific requirement to hold a closed session.

It is proposed that Members remain for 20-30 minutes after each set of interviews (normally no more than 3 in each set) to ensure that all views, key points and emerging recommendations are captured.

Details of suggested witnesses/organisations to invite to hearings are outlined below. Others may be suggested as the review progresses (written evidence may be requested from those who are unable to attend or cannot be included in the timetable).

- **KCC officers** from the Education Quality and Standards division, Children, Young People and Education Directorate
- **Mr Roger Gough**, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, and/or Mrs Shellina Prendergast, Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, Kent County Council
- **Mr Patrick Leeson**, Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education Directorate
- **Tony Doran**, Headteacher of Virtual School Kent
- **Julie Ely**, Head of SEN Assessment & Placement, Children, Young People and Education
- Representatives of **local authorities** in England where the Pupil Premium is closing the attainment gap between vulnerable learners and their peers
- Representatives of the **Education Endowment Foundation**
- Representatives of the **Sutton Trust**
- Representatives of the **Education Policy Institute**
- **Representatives of Kent Early Years settings** that are narrowing the attainment gap through an effective use of the Early Years Pupil Premium
- **Representatives of Kent Primary schools** that are narrowing the attainment gap through an effective use of the Pupil Premium
- **Representatives of Kent Secondary schools** that are narrowing the attainment gap through an effective use of the Pupil Premium

- **Academics, professionals, advisers** and other witnesses who can make relevant contributions
- **Other**

8 Evidence Gathering – Written Evidence

An invitation for written evidence from Kent schools may be arranged through KCC's Education e-bulletin (KELSI).

In addition, a press release may be organised to make residents, local organisations and other stakeholders aware of the establishment of the select committee, and to invite them to submit written evidence.

9 Site Visits

A number of site visits may be arranged to provide Members with the opportunity to gain a better insight into particular issues with relevance to the review. This could include visits to Kent Primary and Secondary schools, and visits to meet with children and young people in care in Kent.

10 Project Risks

The tight timescale necessitates a focused approach.

Recommendations:

1. To approve the Terms of Reference and general approach to the review of the Pupil Premium and its effectiveness in narrowing the attainment gap for Kent's vulnerable learners.

Contacts:

Gaetano Romagnuolo
Research Officer – Overview and Scrutiny
Tel: 03000 416624
Email: gaetano.romagnuolo@kent.gov.uk

Denise Fitch
Democratic Services Manager
Tel: 03000 416090
Email: denise.fitch@kent.gov.uk