

# Pupil Premium Select Committee Report

July 2018



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# Contents

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	<b>Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1	Committee Membership	6
1.2	Scene Setting	7
1.3	Terms of Reference	8
1.4	Scope	9
1.5	Recommendations	10
1.6	Methodology	12
<b>2</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1	The Pupil Premium: What Is It and Who is Eligible?	15
2.2	Why Does the Attainment Gap Matter?	20
2.3	Attainment and Progress	23
2.4	The National Picture	25
2.5	The Local Picture	28
<b>3</b>	<b>Entitlement and Monitoring</b>	<b>34</b>
3.1	Entitlement and Take-Up	35
3.2	Monitoring	42
<b>4</b>	<b>Teaching and Parental Engagement</b>	<b>52</b>
4.1	School Leadership and Teaching	53
4.2	Parental Engagement and Aspirations	61
4.3	Transition	65
<b>5</b>	<b>Early Years, Children in Care and Service Children</b>	<b>70</b>
5.1	Early Years	71
5.2	Children in Care	77
5.3	Service Children	82
<b>6</b>	<b>Sharing Best Practice</b>	<b>86</b>
6.1	Toolkits	87
6.2	Sharing Best Practice	90
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Appendix 1</b> Evidence	<b>102</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b> Glossary of Abbreviations	<b>110</b>
<b>Appendix 3</b> Tables and Charts	<b>112</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>122</b>

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# Foreword

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For too many children, poverty and social background will limit their life chances.

Schools and good educational outcomes can play a central role in counter-acting disadvantage. Yet, despite the very welcome introduction of the Pupil Premium, the attainment gap between vulnerable children and their peers is narrowing too slowly; at the current rate of progress it will take 50 years to close it.

We know that there are successful schools in Kent that are bucking the trend and are helping their disadvantaged students to attain as well as their peers. We believe that, in order to maximise the impact of the Pupil Premium and accelerate the academic progress of vulnerable children, the sharing of good practice amongst Kent schools is vital.

During the course of this review it has also become apparent to us that the earlier the intervention, the greater the impact on eradicating the achievement gap. If resources were redistributed to focus more on early years, we believe that it would be possible to reduce the gap before it grows larger and larger as children move through the education system.

A more effective use of the Pupil Premium through the sharing of good practice, and a focus on early intervention, could go a long way to making sure that the life chances of Kent children are not determined by the circumstances of their birth.

Lesley Game

Chairman of the Pupil Premium Select Committee



# 1.Executive Summary

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## 1.1. Committee Membership

1.1.1. The Committee consists of nine elected Members of Kent County Council (KCC): seven members of the Conservative Party, one member of the Labour Party and one member of the Liberal Democrat Party.



Mrs Clair Bell  
Conservative  
Ashford Rural East



Mr Andy Booth  
Conservative  
Sheppey



Mrs Penny Cole  
Conservative  
Dartford East



Mrs Trudy Dean  
Liberal Democrat  
Malling Central



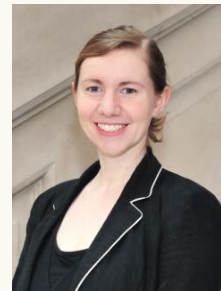
Mrs Lesley Game  
Conservative (Chair)  
Cliftonville



Ms Sarah Hamilton  
Conservative  
Tunbridge Wells Rural



Mr James McInroy  
Conservative  
Tunbridge Wells West



Dr Lauren Sullivan  
Labour  
Northfleet & Gravesend  
West



Mr Mike Whiting  
Conservative  
Swale West<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Whiting stood down from the Committee in December 2017 due to his new appointment as Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste

## 1.2. Scene Setting

- 1.2.1. One of the key ambitions of KCC is that Kent should be a place where families thrive and where all children and young people develop well and are equipped for achievement in life.
- 1.2.2. 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 of others, as social and economic conditions determine more than ever a child's success in the education system and labour market.
- 1.2.3. Although the school system alone cannot solve the problem of low social mobility, it can make a significant contribution to improving the life chances of disadvantaged children.
- 1.2.4. 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 school 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 (FSM) and looked-after children (LAC) - remain too wide.
- 1.2.5. 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 was set up to investigate the impact of the Pupil Premium, and to inform policies aimed at narrowing the attainment gap and at helping disadvantaged children and young people to achieve the educational and life outcomes they deserve.



### 1.3. Terms of Reference

1.3.1 To contextualise the Pupil Premium and to identify the groups of vulnerable learners who are currently supported by the Pupil Premium in Kent.

1.3.2 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.

1.3.3 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.

1.3.4 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.

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## 1.4. Scope

1.4.1. The complexity of this topic and the tight timetable for the review required a clear and focused approach. Key themes and aspects 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 in each 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.**

## **1.5. Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1**

**KCC's Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should carry out an in-depth investigation into the reasons behind the under-registration of children eligible for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium funding, and into interventions that will promote Free School Meal registrations and Pupil Premium take-up.**

### **Recommendation 2**

**Many Kent schools identify one school governor to act as champion for all children in receipt of any type of Pupil Premium. The Committee recommends that this good practice is shared by all Kent schools.**

**The governor should:**

- be responsible for monitoring the allocation of Pupil Premium funding and its impact**
- raise awareness of this funding amongst the rest of the governing body**
- attend regular Pupil Premium training to keep up-to-date with policy developments in this area.**
- encourage better exchange of information between schools to promote a smoother transition.**

### **Recommendation 3**

**KCC's Early Help and Preventative Services team should increase the provision and presence of its services within local schools' premises by locating some of its operations within those settings.**

### **Recommendation 4**

**KCC's Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should continue to actively promote better information sharing between Kent Early Years providers, primary and secondary schools in order to facilitate a smoother transition for disadvantaged children and to provide them with the academic and pastoral support that meets their specific needs.**

### **Recommendation 5**

**KCC's Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should explore opportunities to support and promote additional speech and language provision in pre-school settings, including working with the NHS as a key partner and organisations in the voluntary sector.**

### **Recommendation 6**

**KCC's Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education should write to the Secretary of State for Education to inform him that the Committee supports the recommendation of the Social Mobility Commission's report that Early Years Pupil Premium funding should be doubled, funded by either a re-distribution of Primary Pupil Premium or from elsewhere within the DfE budget.**

### **Recommendation 7**

**KCC's Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should carry out a pilot to determine the extent to which increasing the Early Years Pupil Premium funding rate would have a positive impact on narrowing the attainment gap.**

### **Recommendation 8**

**KCC's Corporate Director for Children, Education and Young people should work with other local authorities that place children in care in Kent schools to ensure that consideration is given to the appropriateness of the placements, taking into account whether adequate support is in place for the Pupil Premium Plus to be spent effectively.**

### **Recommendation 9**

**KCC's Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should produce more concise versions of both the Kent Primary and Secondary Pupil Premium Toolkits. For the current cost of £240, each of these versions should be sold as part of a package that includes the full version as well as training for school leaders on how best to use them.**

### **Recommendation 10**

**KCC's Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should ensure that Pupil Premium best practice at many Kent schools continues to be encouraged and shared across all Kent schools and Early Years providers. This best practice should be further promoted through the Kelsi website and through collaboration with the Kent Association of Headteachers.**

## 1.6. Methodology

1.6.1. The Pupil Premium Select Committee held 25 hearing sessions with a wide range of witnesses, including representatives of nurseries and of Kent primary and secondary schools, the Education Endowment Foundation, other local authorities, as well as a number of senior KCC officers. The Committee also made one visit to local children in care, four visits to local primary and secondary schools, and one visit to the Sacred Heart Catholic School in London – the 2017 National Pupil Premium Award (Secondary) winner. Finally, the Committee received written evidence from a variety of sources, including the Kent Association of Headteachers.

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## 2. Background

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Schools have long been considered the key to achieving equality of opportunity and promoting better outcomes for disadvantaged young people.

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have lower average earnings, poorer health and a greater chance of becoming involved in crime than their more affluent peers.

Despite success in improving results and raising standards, and the introduction of the Pupil Premium, the attainment gap in the UK is only narrowing very slowly.

The Pupil Premium has encouraged schools to review how they raise standards for disadvantaged students. However, it is clear that more can, and should, be done to promote social mobility and improve the life chances of vulnerable children in Kent.

## 2.1. The Pupil Premium: What Is It and Who Is Eligible?

2.1.1. The Pupil Premium is funding given to publicly funded schools in England to support the education of disadvantaged pupils. It was introduced in 2011 and is paid as a separate grant in addition to the Dedicated Schools Grant. With the exception of Pupil Premium payments for LAC, it is not affected by the introduction of the National Funding Formula for schools.<sup>2</sup>

2.1.2. There are a number of Pupil Premium strands. They are the:

- Pupil Premium
- Pupil Premium Plus (PPP)
- Service Pupil Premium
- Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP).<sup>3</sup>

2.1.3. With the broadening of Pupil Premium eligibility criteria, total annual funding increased nearly four-fold between 2011-12 and 2017-18, from £623 million to £2.4 billion nationally.<sup>4</sup>

### **Pupil Premium**

2.1.4. The Pupil Premium is allocated for disadvantaged children who are registered as eligible for FSM in the previous six years (referred to as Ever 6 FSM). Children may be eligible to receive free school meals if their parents/guardians receive any of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if they apply on or after 1 April 2018 their household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they get)<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> House of Commons Library (2017) The Pupil Premium. Briefing Paper Number 6700, London

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Gov.uk (26 Apr 2018) Apply for Free School Meals, online: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>



2.1.5. The amount currently allocated for pupils varies as follows:

- £1,320 for pupils from Reception to Year 6
- £935 for pupils in Years 7 to 11.<sup>6</sup>

2.1.6. In 2017-18, £2.2 billion (91%) of the total allocation of £2.4 billion was allocated for pupils qualifying for the Premium because of their FSM status.<sup>7</sup>

### **Pupil Premium Plus**

2.1.7. PPP is allocated for each child who is looked-after by a local authority, or who has left the care of a local authority in England or Wales because of adoption, a special guardianship order, or a child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order). Each looked-after child is eligible for £1,900. In 2017-18, £189 million (8% of the total) was allocated to looked-after and previously looked-after children.<sup>8</sup>

### **Service Pupil Premium**

2.1.8. A Service Pupil Premium of £300 is paid for each pupil who has had a parent in the regular armed forces at any time in the previous six years. It is also paid for children who receive a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme following the death of a parent while serving the armed forces. In 2017-18, £23 million (1% of the total) was allocated to Service children.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

**Figure 1: Pupil Premium allocations by element, 2011-12 to 2017-18, England**

£ millions, cash				
	Element			Total
	Deprivation	Service children	Looked after children	
2011-12	£594	£9	£20	£623
2012-13	£1,141	£13	£26	£1,180
2013-14	£1,784	£17	£38	£1,840
2014-15	£2,230	£19	£164	£2,413
2015-16	£2,235	£21	£160	£2,416
2016-17	£2,215	£22	£175	£2,412
2017-18	£2,187	£23	£189	£2,399

**Source:** House of Commons Library (2017) The Pupil Premium. Briefing Paper Number 6700, London

### **Early Years Pupil Premium**

2.1.9. Introduced in April 2015, the EYPP is additional funding for 3 and 4 year-olds who are receiving state-funded early education and:

- meet the benefit-related criteria for FSM; or
- are currently looked after by a local authority in England or Wales; or

- have left care in England and Wales through adoption, a special guardianship order or a child arrangement order.<sup>10</sup>

2.1.10. The funding equates to up to £300 extra per year for each disadvantaged child who meets the eligibility criteria.<sup>11</sup>

2.1.11. In 2017-18, £31 million of the EYPP funding was allocated to local authorities, as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant, for distribution to Early Years providers.<sup>12</sup>

### **Pupil Premium Payment**

2.1.12. Payment of the Pupil Premium varies according to the type of school and the Pupil Premium element.

#### Mainstream settings

2.1.13. For maintained schools, the Government pays the local authority in quarterly instalments. The local authority passes it onto its schools based on each eligible pupil on the January school census. Academies and Free Schools are paid directly by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in quarterly instalments.<sup>13</sup>

#### Non-mainstream settings

2.1.14. The ESFA allocates Pupil Premium funding to local authorities for eligible children in hospital schools and alternative provision, for which the local authority pays full tuition fees but does not maintain. Local authorities must pass on Pupil Premium funding for pupils in non-maintained special schools; this may be done on a termly basis.<sup>14</sup>

2.1.15. For other alternative provision settings, the local authority may pass on the funding to the provider. Alternatively, in consultation with non-mainstream settings, it may spend it specifically on additional educational support to raise the standard of attainment for the eligible pupils.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Gov.uk (13 Feb 2015) Extra funding to prepare for the early years pupil premium, online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-funding-to-prepare-for-the-early-years-pupil-premium>

<sup>12</sup> Gov.uk (26 Apr 2018) Apply for Free School Meals, online: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

## Looked-after children (LAC)

- 2.1.16. Virtual School heads are responsible for managing Pupil Premium funding for children currently looked-after by the local authority and for allocating it to schools and alternative provision settings. They can pass on the full funding received for a child to the relevant school or alternative provider, but they are not required to do so.<sup>16</sup>

## Accountability

- 2.1.17. Local authorities have to certify that they have passed on the correct amount of Pupil Premium funding to schools or, where funding has been spent centrally, that it has been used in accordance with the conditions of the grant.<sup>17</sup>
- 2.1.18. Local authority maintained schools are required to publish, on their websites, a strategy for using Pupil Premium funding. There is no parallel obligation on academies unless it is provided for in their funding agreement. The Department for Education (DfE) recommends that academies should publish their Pupil Premium strategy regardless of whether this is required by the school's funding agreement.<sup>18</sup>
- 2.1.19. Schools are also accountable for their use of the Pupil Premium via the performance tables, which show the performance of disadvantaged pupils in comparison with other pupils.<sup>19</sup>
- 2.1.20. Ofsted inspections report on the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils who attract the Pupil Premium. If Ofsted identifies weaknesses in a school's provision for disadvantaged pupils, it normally recommends that the school commissions a Pupil Premium review. Reviews can also be recommended by other bodies, including the school itself; the DfE; and the school's local authority, academy trust or Regional Schools Commissioner.<sup>20</sup>
- 2.1.21. Ofsted inspections of services for LAC require an annual report from the Virtual School Head, which should include:

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

- details of how the Pupil Premium for LAC has been managed, and
- evidence of how Pupil Premium spending has supported the achievement of children looked after by the local authority.<sup>21</sup>

## 2.2. Why Does the Attainment Gap Matter?

2.2.1. Schools have long been considered the key to achieving equality of opportunity and promoting better outcomes for disadvantaged young people.<sup>22</sup>

2.2.2. It is now widely recognised that it is vital to address these inequalities through education from an early age, because they will continue into later life outcomes. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have lower average earnings, poorer health and a greater chance of becoming involved in crime than their more affluent peers.<sup>23 24</sup>

2.2.3. According to the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, if every secondary school went half way towards matching the performance of the best schools facing a similar context, this would mean thousands more disadvantaged and low-attaining students leaving school with better results. Over 14,000 more children from low-income backgrounds would achieve five good GCSEs including English and maths. Raising the bar on low attainment in schools with similar intakes at 11 would mean 60,000 more students attaining five good GCSEs including English and maths.<sup>25</sup>

2.2.4. Better educational outcomes would make a significant difference to social mobility and to people's lives.

### Earnings

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Education Policy Institute (Aug 2017) Closing the Gap? Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage, London

<sup>23</sup> Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) Cracking the Code: How Schools Can Improve Social Mobility, London

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

- People with five good GCSEs earn around 10% more than similar people who hold lower level or no qualifications.
- The lifetime productivity gain of attaining qualifications at this level compared to similar people who hold lower levels or no qualifications is worth £100,000 for men and around £85,000 for women.<sup>26</sup>

### **Employment**

- People with five good GCSEs are more likely to be in employment than individuals who hold lower level or no qualifications.
- A spell of unemployment at the age of 18 can lower an individual's wages by 12-15% by the age of 42 compared to a comparable person who did not experience unemployment.<sup>27</sup>

### **Health and wellbeing**

- Achieving five good GCSEs is associated with a lower risk of depression, smoking and obesity in later life.
- A third (32%) of young women who do not achieve at least five GCSEs at grade G or above have a child by the age of 19; this means that they are ten times more likely to do so than those who achieve five GCSEs at grade C or above.<sup>28</sup>

2.2.5. The cost to society is also substantial, in terms of lost growth, wasted talent, lower demand and higher costs for the state in social security and public services. For instance, in 2013, the bill for in-work tax credits, which help bridge the gap between low earnings and the income families need to meet the cost of living, was £21 billion.<sup>29</sup>

2.2.6. Disadvantage therefore results in both economic and personal costs. When people fail to achieve their potential, this has an impact on the individual, their family, their community, the economy and the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

country. As the strategic document Vision for Kent 2012-2022 points out, “at a time of reductions in public spending we must prevent people from becoming more disadvantaged and strengthen the resilience of individuals to deal with life’s challenges.”<sup>30</sup>

2.2.7. The relationship between poverty, home background and life chances is more pronounced in the UK than in most other European countries.<sup>31</sup> Approximately two million children aged between 4 and 16 in England (29%) come from disadvantaged backgrounds.<sup>32</sup>

2.2.8. Despite reforms to schools and success in improving results and raising standards, the attainment gap in the UK is only narrowing very slowly. According to the Education Policy Institute (EPI), despite significant investment and targeted intervention programmes, the gap between disadvantaged 16-year-old pupils and their peers only narrowed by three months of learning between 2007 and 2016. In 2016, the gap nationally, at the end of secondary school, was still 19.3 months. The EPI estimated that, at current trends, it would take around 50 years for the disadvantage gap to close completely by the time pupils take their GCSEs.<sup>33</sup>

***“...at current trends, it would take around 50 years for the disadvantage gap to close completely by the time pupils take their GCSEs.”***

2.2.9. There is nothing pre-ordained about the UK being a low social mobility society where children’s starting point in life determines their life chances: growing evidence from the English school system, and evidence gathered by the Committee, demonstrates that some schools are bucking the trend, enabling their disadvantaged students to far exceed what would have been predicted for them based on experience nationally.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Kent County Council, Vision for Kent 2012-2022

<sup>31</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent’s Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>32</sup> House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts (2015) Funding for Disadvantaged Pupils, Third Report of Session 2015–16, London

<sup>33</sup> Education Policy Institute (Aug 2017) Closing the Gap? Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage, London

<sup>34</sup> Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) Cracking the Code: How Schools Can Improve Social Mobility, London

## 2.1. Attainment and Progress

2.1.1. Although the focus of this report is on the attainment gap, and although it is widely accepted that gaps in academic attainment contribute to low social mobility and should therefore be a key indicator of policy success, it is important to acknowledge that there are other factors that add more complexity to this topic.

2.1.2. The eligibility of pupils for FSM is not necessarily a stable indicator. The Pupil Premium is only paid for children who are registered to claim FSM; it does not include those who are eligible but not registered. Nationally, around 200,000 children aged 4-15 appear to be entitled to FSM but are not claiming them. This represents around 14% the total number of pupils thought to be entitled to FSM.<sup>35</sup>

2.1.3. Furthermore, the criteria that determine eligibility for FSM can change over time. To be eligible for FSM a child or their parent/carer must be in receipt of a qualifying benefit. Universal Credit, which is being gradually rolled out across the country, replaces many of these benefits by a single payment. Once this roll-out is complete many of the current criteria for determining entitlement for FSM will no longer exist.<sup>36</sup>

2.1.4. Also, the attainment gap does not necessarily reflect a school's ability to prepare its students. For instance, in a school where very few pupils receive the Pupil Premium, poor attainment from one child has the potential to distort results and widen the school's attainment gap. One witness pointed to difficult circumstances which led to poor attendance being an issue that could significantly widen the gap in a small cohort.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> House of Commons Library (2017) The Pupil Premium. Briefing Paper Number 6700, London

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018, Maidstone



2.1.5. In some cases, it can be more meaningful to focus on academic **progress** than on academic attainment. Despite a persistent attainment gap, students' academic progress in Kent is generally good and is improving. The percentage of schools and Early Years settings judged to be Good or Outstanding by Ofsted has consistently increased since 2012, (59% in 2012, 70% in 2013, 75% in 2014, 84% in 2016 and currently 92%).<sup>38</sup> Such progress should always be applauded.

***“Despite a persistent attainment gap, students’ academic progress in Kent is generally good and is improving.”***

2.1.6. The importance of taking progress into account is particularly apparent when taking pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who are also eligible for Pupil Premium into account. For example, in some cases it may not be possible to close the gap between pupils with severe and complex needs (SCN) and those without such needs. Pupil Premium can still be used to demonstrate progress in building a portfolio of skills – such as “skills for working life” - and it is important to celebrate their success. However, this progress is not always reflected in attainment and so the attainment gap may not be the most appropriate measure when considering Pupil Premium and SEND pupils.<sup>39</sup>

2.1.7. Academic attainment alone does not capture all the aspects in which pupils might have developed. This emotional and social development is crucial in improving their ability to learn which is the cornerstone of academic achievement.<sup>40</sup> KCC has long recognised the role of schools in improving factors such as well-being, resilience, self-motivated learning, perseverance and ambition.<sup>41 42</sup>

2.1.8. Activities such as sports, performing arts, music lessons, after school clubs and trips can also make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress and development.<sup>43</sup> The importance of enrichment activities has also been acknowledged by the Grammar Schools and Social Mobility Select Committee.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>39</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>40</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>41</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>42</sup> Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) Cracking the Code: How Schools Can Improve Social Mobility, London

<sup>43</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>44</sup> Kent County Council (2016) Grammar Schools and Social Mobility Select Committee, Maidstone

## 2.2. The National Picture

- 2.2.1. According to the January 2017 school census, around 28% of all children in England (just over two million) are eligible for the Pupil Premium.<sup>45</sup> The number of eligible children varies widely across the country, with the North East (32%) and London (33%) having the highest percentage of their school population eligible for the Pupil Premium, and the South East (19%) having the least.<sup>46</sup>
- 2.2.2. Disadvantaged pupils, on average, do not perform as well in school as their non-disadvantaged peers. Although there has been a greater focus on improving attainment in schools, the link between social demography and educational destiny has not been broken.<sup>47</sup>
- 2.2.3. Whilst the attainment gap has narrowed over the last 10 years,<sup>48</sup> disadvantaged children remain – on average – four months behind at the end of reception year, 11 months behind at the end of primary school and 19 months behind at Key Stage 4.<sup>49</sup> At the current rate of progress, it will take 50 years to get to a point where the gap does not grow during a child's time in school.<sup>50</sup>
- 2.2.4. Figure 2 below shows that the gap is already present in the early years, and that it continues to widen throughout a child's time at school.

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<sup>45</sup> Gov.uk (2 Dec 2017) Pupil Premium 2017 to 2018: allocations (local authority and parliamentary constituency level), online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2017-to-2018>

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Education Policy Institute (Aug 2017) Closing the Gap? Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage, London

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> DfE (Dec 2017) Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential

<sup>50</sup> Education Policy Institute (Aug 2017) Closing the Gap? Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage, London

It also shows that, whilst the gap is narrowing, the rate of change is slow, with just a three-month improvement between 2007 and 2016.

**Figure 2: Attainment gaps over time for disadvantaged pupils in primary and secondary schools (months), 2007-16, England**

School types	Year	Early Years	Primary school	Secondary school	
State-funded mainstream	2007	5.5	12.3	21.9	
	2008	5.3	11.8	21.8	
	2009	5.2	11.5	21.7	
	2010	5.0	11.0	20.7	
	2011	4.9	11.1	20.2	
	2012	4.9	10.2	19.6	
	2013	4.7	10.0	19.0	
	2014	4.6	9.9	19.0	
	2015	4.3	9.6	19.2	
	2016	4.3	9.5	18.9	
	2015-2016 change		-0.1 (-1%)	-0.1 (-1%)	-0.3 (-1%)
	2007-2016 change (%)		-1.2 (-22%)	-2.8 (-23%)	-3.0 (-14%)
	All state-funded	2016	4.3	9.5	19.3

**Source:** Education Policy Institute (Aug 2017), Closing the Gap? Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage, London

2.2.5. There have been significant variations across the country in terms of narrowing the attainment gap. London, the South and the East have the smallest gap (16 to 18 months at the end of Key Stage 4), while the East Midlands and the Humber, the North and the South West have a gap of 22 months. Areas such as Richmond-upon-Thames and Windsor and Maidenhead have performed relatively well, with their secondary

school gap closing by over six months since 2012. In contrast, in areas such as Leeds and Liverpool the gaps have widened since 2012.<sup>51</sup>

### **National Policies and Strategies**

2.2.6. Numerous national reports and policies focus on narrowing the attainment gap. These include:

- **Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential (Dec 2017).** This plan shows the DfE's commitment to tackling social mobility. One of its four aims is to "close the attainment gap in schools while continuing to raise standards for all".
- **The Pupil Premium (12 Dec 2017).** An update to a previous House of Commons briefing paper setting out the background to Pupil Premium funding.
- **State of the Nation 2016 (November 2016).** An annual report by the Social Mobility Commission, including consideration of educational reforms that promote social mobility.
- **Divergent Pathways (July 2016).** The Education Policy Institute's report considered whether policies including school funding had had an impact on the size of the gap over successive years and in different contexts.
- **Funding for Disadvantaged Pupils (June 2015).** The National Audit Office evaluated the Department's implementation of the Pupil Premium policy and how well schools were using the funding.
- **The Pupil Premium (2013).** The Ofsted report drew together elements of best practice that Inspectors found from visiting 68 schools.

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<sup>51</sup> Education Policy Institute (Aug 2017) Closing the Gap? Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage, London

## 2.3. The Local Picture

2.3.1. According to the January 2017 school census, Pupil Premium was provided for 24% of Kent's pupils. Total Pupil Premium funding for 2017-2018 was £57.4 million.<sup>52</sup>

2.3.2. The English Indices of Deprivation 2015 ranks Kent in the least deprived 50% of local authorities. However, there are areas of Kent - some coastal towns in particular - that are within the 20% most deprived wards in England.<sup>53</sup> Figure 3 (see also Appendix 3) shows how the number of FSM eligible learners varies significantly across Kent, from just 1.7%-4.9% to 20.1%-33.7%.

**Figure 3: Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals across the Kent wards (2017 Census)**

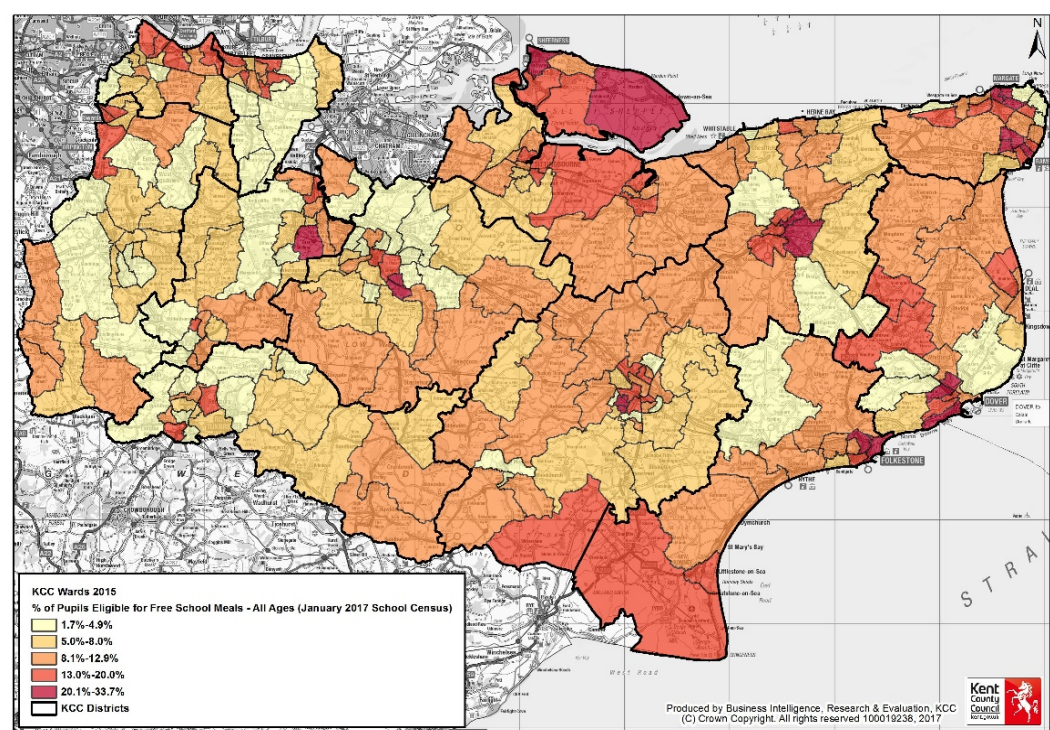
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<sup>52</sup> Gov.uk (2 Dec 2017) Pupil Premium 2017 to 2018: allocations (local authority and parliamentary constituency level), online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2017-to-2018>

<sup>53</sup> KCC, Summary of facts and figures, online: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent/summary-of-kent-facts-and-figures#tab-1>

**Source:** Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

2.3.



Throughout Kent, levels of attainment for pupils supported by the deprivation element of Pupil Premium have improved over recent years.<sup>54</sup> However, the attainment of non-disadvantaged pupils has also improved and the gap between the two remains wide.<sup>55</sup>

- In Early Years, the number of FSM children achieving a good level of development was 56% in 2017, compared with 77% of non-FSM children. The gap (21%) is a slight increase on the year before (19%) and slightly above national average (17%).<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>55</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>56</sup> Gov.uk (19 Oct 2017) Table 6: Achievement in Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) Teacher Assessments by Free School Meal Eligibility and Local Authority, online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2016-to-2017>

- In Key Stage 1, in 2017, the gaps in achievement for FSM pupils ranged from 19% to 22% in reading, writing and mathematics. Whilst these were all improvements from the previous year (21% to 23%) they were each above the national average (17% to 19% in 2017).<sup>57</sup>
- In Key Stage 2, in 2017, the attainment gap for FSM pupils in reading, writing and mathematics combined was 26%, which was above the England average of 22% and slightly higher than the previous year (25%).<sup>58</sup>
- In Key Stage 4, in 2017, the FSM gap for pupils achieving grade 4 or above in English and mathematics was 36.4%, compared to 27.4% nationally. Figure 4 shows how Kent's gap has widened slightly in recent years, and remains above the national average.<sup>59</sup>

**Figure 4: FSM to non-FSM percentage gap for students achieving a grade 4 (C) or above in GCSE English and maths, Kent and national, 2017**

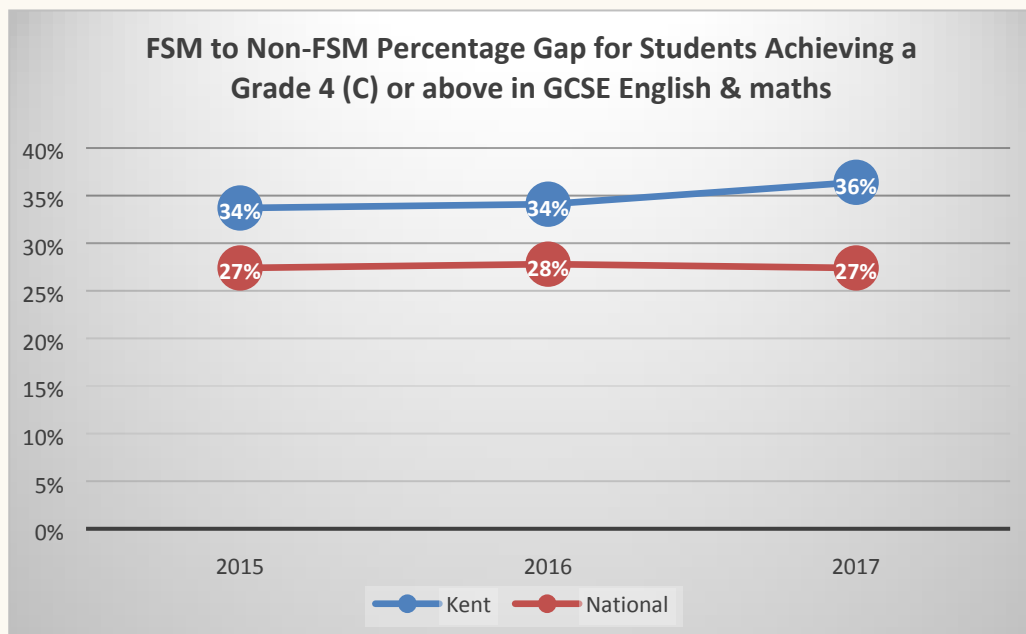
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**NOTE:** The GLD FSM Eligible attainment gap of 10.1% quoted in the Vulnerable Learner's Strategy is based on the difference in attainment between **statutory aged** pupils who are eligible for FSM and the attainment of all other pupils at the end of EYFS. This differs from the DfE data in the Statistical First Release published in November 2017, which is based on the difference in attainment between **all pupils** at the end of EYFS who are eligible for FSM and all other pupils at the end of EYFS.

<sup>57</sup> KCC Management Information Unit (March 2017 and November 2017)

<sup>58</sup> KCC Management Information Unit (December 2016 and December 2017)

<sup>59</sup> Ibid



**Source:** KCC Management Information Unit

2.3.4. The attainment gap in Kent does not always compare favourably with its statistical neighbours. Figure 5 below shows the gap in months between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the national average for non-disadvantaged pupils, in both Kent and its statistical neighbours. This data suggests that whilst Kent's attainment gap is narrower than its statistical neighbours in the Early Years, it widens and becomes greater in secondary schools.

**Figure 5: Attainment gap in months between disadvantaged pupils and all other pupils in Kent and some of its statistical neighbouring local authorities (2016)**

Local Authority	Early Years	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools



Kent	-2.8	-10.5	-23.7
Essex	-3.7	-9.4	-19.8
Buckinghamshire	-4.1	-7.9	-22.6
Lancashire	-4.4	-10.7	-22.9
Hampshire	-4.5	-7.8	-23.0

**Source:** Education Policy Institute (Aug 2017), Closing the Gap? Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage, London

2.3.5. As the above table indicates, levels of progress for disadvantaged children generally drop in secondary school. This might be attributable to the fact that the curriculum has narrowed and all assessments are now by examination rather than by coursework. These changes also make direct comparisons between academic years difficult.<sup>60 61 62</sup>

2.3.6. The attainment of Children in Care (CiC) in Kent in 2010 was significantly below the national average on every indicator. Following a school improvement review, Kent CiC are now ranked above the national average on most indicators.<sup>63</sup>

- In Early Years, the gap relates to very few children (20 Kent and 7 other Local Authority), but the gap has widened from 33.3% in 2016 to 49.4% in 2017.
- In Key Stage 1, in 2017, the proportion of CiC who attained or exceeded the expected standard in reading was 61.9%, an attainment gap of 17%. This was a significant improvement on the 2016 figure of 38.3%. In writing, 52.4% attained or exceeded the expected standard, a gap of 20.0%. Again this was much higher than the 2016 figure of 29.4%. The attainment gap was widest in mathematics, at 30.9%, compared to a 2016 figure of 32%.
- In Key Stage 2, in 2017, outcomes were also significantly better than the previous year. The proportion of CiC who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was 38.1%, compared with 21.6% in 2016. The achievement gap was 18.8%, compared to 36.8% in 2016.
- In Key Stage 4, in 2016, 20% of CiC achieved A\*-C English and mathematics. This was an improvement on the year before

<sup>60</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>61</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 22 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>62</sup> Education Policy Institute (Aug 2017) Closing the Gap? Trends in Educational Attainment and Disadvantage, London

<sup>63</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

(14.4%), and better than the national average of 17.5%, but well below the average for all Kent pupils (63.7%).<sup>64 65 66</sup>

### Local Policies and Strategies

2.3.7. KCC recognises that further work and new approaches are needed. It has already implemented a range of strategies, plans and activities aimed at improving the life chances of vulnerable children and young people, including:

- Vision for Kent 2012-2022. One of three main ambitions is to “tackle disadvantage”
- The Vision and Priorities for Improvement 2017-2020
- Kent’s Strategy for Vulnerable Learners 2017-2020
- Revised Learning, Employment and Skills Strategy 2017-20
- Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2016-2019
- Kent’s Strategy for School Improvement 2016
- Early Help & Preventative Services Strategy and Three-Year Plan 2015-18
- Grammar Schools & Social Mobility Select Committee (June 2016).

2.3.8. Through its Kent’s Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, KCC’s Directorate for Children, Young People and Education is committed to helping to ensure that the most effective use is made of Pupil Premium funding.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Gov.uk (11 May 2017) Table LA3a: Key stage 4 eligibility and performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, online:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/outcomes-for-children-looked-after-by-las-31-march-2016>

<sup>65</sup> Kent County Council (7 Nov 2017), A message from Patrick Leeson: 7 November 2017 weekly update, online: <http://www.kelsi.org.uk/news-and-events/directors-update/7-november-2017-weekly-update>

<sup>66</sup> Gov.uk (14 July 2017) Table LA1: GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils at the end of key stage 4 by gender for each local authority<sup>1</sup> and region, online, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2015-to-2016>

<sup>67</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent’s Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

***“We want every child in Kent to achieve well above expectations and not to be held back by their social background. We want every young person to benefit from a broad range of pathways to further learning and employment, for their own achievement and for the success of the Kent economy. We want to ensure that vulnerable children and families have their needs met early so that they do not experience the level of challenge and difficulty in their lives that requires statutory interventions. They should have the same opportunities as all other children and families to flourish, to stay safe and well and succeed in the education system.”***

**Source:** Kent County Council (2017) Kent’s Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

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### **3. Entitlement and Monitoring**

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Many disadvantaged children who are entitled to Pupil Premium funding are not claiming it. The reasons why people do not register for free school meals and Pupil Premium funding are complex and diverse, and they need further investigation.

The Pupil Premium has the potential to bring about a significant improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, but schools do not always use it effectively. Strong monitoring and tracking systems are crucial in ensuring that interventions meet the needs of individual students, narrow the attainment gap and make the best use of resources.

School governors are well placed to ensure that there is effective monitoring of Pupil Premium spending and interventions, and to champion the needs of disadvantaged children.

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### 3.1. Entitlement and Take-Up

- 3.1.1. The Pupil Premium is allocated to disadvantaged children registered as eligible for FSM in any of the previous six years.<sup>68</sup> However, the funding is paid for those registered to claim FSM, and does not include those who are eligible but not registered; the term used by the DfE is “known to be eligible for free school meals”.<sup>69</sup>
- 3.1.2. In order to be registered as eligible for FSM, the pupil or their parent/carer must be in receipt of a qualifying benefit and a request must have been made by them for FSM. In short, Pupil Premium funding is only paid for those who are both eligible and registered for FSM.<sup>70</sup>
- 3.1.3. It is estimated that, nationally, around 200,000 children aged 4-15 are entitled to FSM but are not claiming them. This represents approximately 14% the total number of pupils who are entitled to FSM.<sup>71</sup> In Kent, it is estimated that 21% of eligible 4-year-olds and 22% of eligible 15-year-olds do not claim the funding.<sup>72</sup>

***“In Kent, it is estimated that 21% of eligible 4-year-olds and 22% of eligible 15-year-olds do not claim the funding”***

- 3.1.4. In order to investigate the limited take-up of Pupil Premium funding, the Select Committee explored both the appropriateness of using FSM as the key indicator of eligibility, as well as the specific reasons for the under-registration of children eligible for FSM.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> House of Commons (12 Dec 2017) The Pupil Premium (briefing paper)

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 6 November 2017, Maidstone

## Free School Meals: Key Definitions

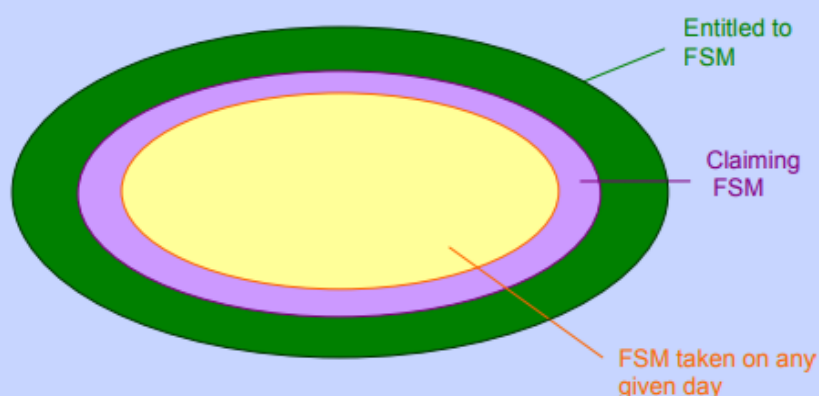
### Key definitions

**Entitled to FSM** –Pupils are entitled to receive FSM if they live in households claiming qualifying benefits (outlined in the section above). Not all families entitled to receive FSM, go on to claim them. The School Census does not collect information on pupils entitled to receive FSM, only those registered to claim them.

**Registered and claiming FSM** – This relates to those who meet the entitlement criteria and register at the school to claim FSM. This is what is recorded by the School Census. This is also what is published in the Department’s Statistical Releases, where it is referred to as “Number known to be eligible for and claiming free school meals”.

**Taking FSM** – This relates to how many of the pupils registered to claim FSM actually take the meal on any given day. The total number of those taking FSM on a snapshot date is recorded on the School Census.

The following diagram illustrates the hierarchy of these three definitions. This diagram will be used throughout the note to help visualise which definition is being referred to, and will be populated with corresponding numbers and proportions throughout the paper.



Source: DfE, Pupils Not Claiming Free School Meals, 2012

## Appropriateness of Free School Meals

- 3.1.5. Although eligibility for FSM is the current criterion for determining Pupil Premium funding, there are a number of concerns about its effectiveness.
- 3.1.6. As stated earlier, eligibility for FSM is not a stable indicator, as the policies that determine it tend to change over time. For instance, the introduction of Universal Credit will replace many of the current entitlement criteria.<sup>73</sup>
- 3.1.7. FSM has also been criticised for being a "black and white measure" that does not always distinguish well between levels of disadvantage. There is potentially very little difference in levels of disadvantage between those on either side of the threshold. The measure has no "shades of grey".<sup>74</sup>
- 3.1.8. Finally, as explained above, many do not receive FSM and Pupil Premium funding because, for various reasons, they do not claim it.<sup>75</sup>
- 3.1.9. There are other criteria that could be used to allocate Pupil Premium funding. One suggestion made to the Committee was that the Pupil Premium could be paid on the basis of attainment rather than disadvantage.<sup>76</sup> However, this would not address effectively the main objective of the Pupil Premium, that is, low social mobility. In addition, using poor attainment as the basis for the funding could create perverse incentives whereby schools were not encouraged to strive for better levels of attainment.<sup>77 78</sup>
- 3.1.10. Other measures have been considered, for example the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) - which assigns a score to each small area of the country based on the proportion of children living in families who are in receipt of low income benefits - and demographic classifications of local areas such as ACORN and Mosaic.
- 3.1.11. All these measures are based on the area where a pupil lives rather than on their individual family circumstances; this seems to defeat the purpose of the Pupil Premium, which aims to target funding towards individual, disadvantaged students.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid

<sup>74</sup> House of Commons Library (2015) Support for Disadvantaged Children in Education in England, London

<sup>75</sup> Ibid

<sup>76</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 15 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>77</sup> The Sutton Trust/Education Endowment Foundation (2015) The Pupil Premium: Next Steps, London

<sup>78</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 22 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>79</sup> House of Commons Library (2015) Support for Disadvantaged Children in Education in England, London



3.1.12. Despite concerns about the appropriateness of using FSM to determine Pupil Premium eligibility and take-up, the Committee is persuaded that its advantages – simplicity, longevity and the focus on individual pupils' disadvantage - still make it the most suitable method.

### **Reasons for under-registrations**

3.1.13. The reasons why some people do not register for FSM and Pupil Premium funding are complex and diverse, ranging from systemic limitations, unawareness and disengagement.

#### **System limitations**

3.1.14. It is argued that the introduction of Universal Credit and free school meals for all infants makes the consistent identification of all disadvantaged pupils more difficult.

3.1.15. Universal Credit is in the process of replacing the legacy system used to determine FSM eligibility. The National Audit Office (NAO) has raised concerns that, by combining benefits, Universal Credit can make it very difficult to identify disadvantaged pupils consistently with previous years.<sup>80</sup>

3.1.16. The NAO also reports that some local authorities and schools believe that the risk of under-registration had been exacerbated by introducing free school meals for all infants in 2014, because this has removed the most obvious incentive for parents to apply in the first three years of school.<sup>81</sup>

3.1.17. Other reasons for under-registration relate to barriers that discourage or even prevent people from applying.

3.1.18. In many instances, lack of awareness is a key explanatory factor. A survey found that 11% of the parents that were interviewed had not claimed meals because they did not know of their entitlement or how to apply

3.1.19. Low literacy levels or language barriers can also make it very difficult for parents to apply for FSM funding. It was suggested that support in the form of translated information was needed to help those with English as an Additional Language.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> National Audit Office (June 2015) Funding for Disadvantaged Pupils, London

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

<sup>82</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

- 3.1.20. In other instances, potential recipients are invisible to official sight and may not be able to advocate for their eligibility by themselves. The Children's Society reports that many young carers remain "hidden" from health, social care and education services, and that these services need to do more to identify them. The Children's Society suggests that young carers are four times more likely than their peers to live in households where no adults are in work. A significant number of young carers are likely to be eligible for FSM and could benefit from targeted support through the Pupil Premium.<sup>83 84</sup>
- 3.1.21. Another barrier is the inability of some people to access or navigate IT technology. For instance, one Headteacher suggested that the low number of children receiving Pupil Premium funding in a centre offering specialist provision for pupils with language and communication needs was partly due to parents' inability to navigate the system.<sup>85</sup> Another Headteacher reported that, when parents were notified by email about FSM applications, many could not access the reminders because of their lack of IT technology.<sup>86</sup>
- 3.1.22. There is some evidence that, in order to facilitate the application process and make sure that all those eligible for Pupil Premium funding are identified, some schools are able to complete the forms on behalf of the parents if provided with their National Insurance numbers and dates of birth.<sup>87</sup>

### Stigma

- 3.1.23. There is conflicting research and evidence about the extent to which stigma is a key factor in limiting registration for FSM. On the one hand, many parents may not want the school or other families to know their family's financial circumstances.
- 3.1.24. However, the way schools handle FSM in the dining room - for example whether they employ discriminatory payment practices - can have an impact on these concerns.<sup>88</sup>
- 3.1.25. Also, research suggests that in schools with higher proportions of pupils registered for and taking a free meal, pupils did not identify embarrassment or stigma as a reason for not taking the meal, whereas in some schools where only a few pupils were registered, pupils were more likely to do so.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> The Children's Society (2013) Hidden from View: The Experiences of Young Carers in England, London

<sup>84</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, written evidence, 14 December 2017

<sup>85</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 20 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>86</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 17 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>87</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 21 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>88</sup> Children's Food Trust (2013) Free School Meals: Why Don't All Parents Sign Up? Literary Review, Sheffield

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

3.1.26. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that, in local secondary schools in particular, it may be difficult to promote FSM applications because of the stigma attached to claiming means-tested funding.<sup>90 91</sup>

### Disengagement

3.1.27. Another reason for under-registration is the disengagement of some parents.

3.1.28. In some cases, parents may not apply for funding because of their negative experiences with the school system; this can alienate them from involvement in school activities and their children's education.<sup>92</sup>

3.1.29. In other cases, parents may be reluctant to disclose personal information because of their suspicion, fear or disconnection from the State. Evidence from local Early Years settings shows that only 47% of children eligible for EYPP funding actually received it, and that a key reason was that many parents refused to disclose details of their benefits because they believed their financial status would be used against them.<sup>93</sup>

3.1.30. Also, although Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils have the lowest attainment of all ethnic groups and make less progress than the average for pupils with similar prior attainment, many do not receive Pupil Premium because their parents work for cash-in-hand in a family business and do not claim benefits.<sup>94 95</sup>

3.1.31. Parents' disengagement may also be due to frustration with the system. For instance, with regard to adopted children, anecdotal evidence indicates that a number of adopters have withdrawn their self-declaration on the school census because they have lost patience with the system. This disengagement is due to having to remind the school that the PPP should be used to support interventions for their children, and to the continual requirement to justify their child's vulnerability.<sup>96</sup>

3.1.32. Finally, in some cases, the literature used to promote Pupil Premium take-up can alienate parents. It was suggested to the Committee that some DfE guidance stereotypes disadvantaged pupils as a group with less potential to succeed academically, and this can make parents feel disaffected.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 20 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>91</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, school visit, 17 January 2018

<sup>92</sup> Ibid

<sup>93</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>94</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, written evidence, 14 December 2017

<sup>95</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Tackling Inequalities for GRT Children and Young People in Schools and Settings, Maidstone

<sup>96</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, written evidence, 19 January 2018

<sup>97</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

3.1.33. Having considered all of these issues, the Committee is persuaded that, on balance, free schools meals remains the most appropriate method for determining Pupil Premium eligibility. However, the Committee firmly believes that the issue of FSM under-registration, and the reasons for it, deserves an in-depth investigation that goes beyond the remit and resources of this review.

3.1.34. It is concerning that many vulnerable children and young people in Kent are not benefitting from the Pupil Premium funding they are entitled to. The Committee therefore recommends the following.

**Recommendation 1**

**KCC's Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should carry out an in-depth investigation into the reasons behind the under-registration of children eligible for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium funding, and into interventions that will promote Free School Meal registrations and Pupil Premium take-up.**

## 3.2. Monitoring

- 3.2.1. The Pupil Premium has the potential to "bring about a significant improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils".<sup>98</sup> However, as the NAO reports, the evidence base is limited and some schools may waste money on ineffective interventions for a number of years without effective challenge.<sup>99</sup>
- 3.2.2. Strong monitoring and tracking systems are crucial in targeting the interventions that meet the needs of individual students, narrow the attainment gap and enable schools to use their resources efficiently.
- 3.2.3. While exploring the merits of monitoring schools' interventions to promote the effective use of Pupil Premium funding, the Committee was confronted by a debate about whether ring-fencing this funding to individual students or a more flexible allocation would be more beneficial for raising their attainment.

### Individual vs flexible allocation of funding

- 3.2.4. There are examples in which the ring-fencing of Pupil Premium funding, coupled with robust monitoring, appears to be effective in raising their attainment.
- 3.2.5. For instance, the Headteacher of Virtual School Kent is responsible for managing Pupil Premium Plus for Kent's CiC. He allocates the money to schools and alternative provision units. This funding is used explicitly and exclusively for children in care, and at least £900 per year is allocated initially to each eligible student.<sup>100 101</sup>
- 3.2.6. The monitoring of CiC's attainment and progress is mainly carried out through statutory Personal Education Plans (PEPs). PEPs enable these pupils to set their own learning targets and to assess their progress regularly. PEPs are also used to help schools to identify the best interventions and support to meet the needs of children in care.<sup>102</sup>
- 3.2.7. The exclusive use of PPP funding for CiC, along with rigorous monitoring, appears to have a positive impact on the attainment of the children in Kent. The percentage of CiC achieving A\*-C in GCSE English and maths increased from 12.1% in 2014 to 20% in 2016.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> National Audit Office (2015) Funding for Disadvantaged Pupils, London

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

<sup>100</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/vsk-resources/pupil-premium-plus>

<sup>102</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>103</sup> DfE (2017), Outcomes for Looked After Children - Table LA3a: Key stage 4 eligibility and performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, and KCC Management Information Unit (Feb 2017)

- 3.2.8. There is also some evidence in relation to adopted children that strengthens the case for focused interventions. Child-specific interventions on building confidence and self-esteem have been vital to helping a child to overcome gaps in attainment. Building confidence and self-esteem is particularly important for adopted children as research demonstrates that the circumstances that have led to the removal from their birth families can have life-long repercussions.<sup>104</sup>
- 3.2.9. In other circumstances, it seems that a more flexible approach, whereby Pupil Premium funding is pooled across a range of vulnerable students, is more appropriate.
- 3.2.10. It is argued that the pooling of resources and interventions that target a group rather than individual students is more beneficial and efficient, because more disadvantaged children can benefit from them.<sup>105 106</sup>
- 3.2.11. This flexible approach also helps to redress one of the main shortcomings of using free school meals as the determinant of Pupil Premium eligibility, that is, the fact that it is a "black and white measure" that does not benefit those who are just above the eligibility threshold but who may still be disadvantaged.<sup>107</sup> Evidence from visits to outstanding schools in deprived areas locally demonstrates that there are circumstances in which a flexible approach is effective and desirable.<sup>108</sup>
- 3.2.12. The case of disadvantaged but academically gifted children also shows that a flexible approach to the allocation of Pupil Premium funding may be desirable.
- 3.2.13. As the Teaching Schools Council and the National College for Teaching and Leadership point out, disadvantaged pupils are not a homogenous group and more able disadvantaged pupils are also at risk of under-achievement. Analysis by the Sutton Trust shows that many disadvantaged pupils who are high performing in Key Stage 2 by scoring in the top 10% nationally, fall badly behind their peers by Key Stage 4, with GCSE results that place them outside the top 25%.<sup>109 110</sup>
- 3.2.14. This conclusion was echoed by a recent KCC select committee on Grammar Schools and Social Mobility, which suggested that attention should also be given to how the Pupil Premium is used to support higher achievers.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, written evidence, 19 January 2018

<sup>105</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 21 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>106</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 20 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>107</sup> House of Commons Library (2015) Support for Disadvantaged Children in Education in England, London

<sup>108</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, school visits, 9 November 2017

<sup>109</sup> Teaching Schools Council and National College for Teaching and Leadership (2016) Effective Pupil Premium Reviews: A Guide Developed by the Teaching Schools Council, London

<sup>110</sup> The Sutton Trust (2015) Missing Talent, London

<sup>111</sup> Kent County Council (2016) Grammar Schools and Social Mobility Select Committee, Maidstone

- 3.2.15. A flexible approach allows schools to decide the extent to which their Pupil Premium funding should be allocated to disadvantaged pupils who are underperforming academically, as opposed to more able children, in order to best meet the needs of both groups.
- 3.2.16. The Committee's conclusion is that, depending on the circumstances, the allocation of Pupil Premium funding on an individual basis and the more flexible approach, can be equally effective in meeting the needs of disadvantaged students and in closing the attainment gap.
- 3.2.17. The Committee also believes that flexibility in the **ways** that Pupil Premium is used to meet the diverse needs of vulnerable children and young people is paramount. Evidence shows that these children can benefit greatly from interventions that are not directly focused on improving their academic attainment, but that are nonetheless improving their learning outcomes. These include increasing pupils' emotional resilience and motivation, as well as enrichment activities - such as school trips, music lessons and after school clubs - that can help these children to develop social and cultural capital and confidence.<sup>112 113 114</sup>

### **Why monitoring**

- 3.2.18. Regardless of the way in which Pupil Premium funding is allocated, the Committee found that rigorous monitoring and accountability systems are crucial to ensuring that interventions used are effective in narrowing the attainment gap and enabling schools to use their resources efficiently.
- 3.2.19. There is strong evidence from several authoritative organisations that monitoring and tracking systems are crucial in helping to close the attainment gap.
- 3.2.20. A key finding of Ofsted - from inspections of 68 primary and secondary schools to investigate how effectively they were spending their Pupil Premium funding to maximise achievement - was that, when they effectively monitored and evaluated the impact of their spending, this made a considerable difference to the effectiveness of the actions they were taking.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, school visits, 9 November 2017

<sup>113</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, school visit, 17 January 2018

<sup>114</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>115</sup> Ofsted (2013) The Pupil Premium: How Schools Are Spending the Funding Successfully to Maximise Achievement, Manchester

3.2.21. Ofsted found that, where schools monitored the impact of their spending effectively and efficiently, they:

- Brought together all the evidence available to them to make judgements about what was going well and what needed to change, including data, pupils' work, observations, case studies, and pupils' and staff's views.
- Did not wait until the end of an initiative or intervention to see if it was working.
- Made changes to their planned strategies according to what they learned from their monitoring and evaluation information.
- Took as rigorous an approach to evaluating the impact of pastoral interventions – those related to attendance, building confidence, improving behaviour and working with parents – as they did to academic ones.<sup>116</sup>

3.2.22. Research by the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) into what constitutes effective use of the Pupil Premium has identified seven 'building blocks of success'. These include decisions that are based on data and that respond to evidence - using frequent, rather than one-off assessment and decision points - and a focus on outcomes (see also Chapter 6).<sup>117</sup>

3.2.23. The Teaching Schools Council echoes these findings stating that, although the schools that are most successful in raising the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils differ in many ways, they all share an approach to Pupil Premium that is strategic, evidence-based and ambitious.<sup>118</sup>

3.2.24. KCC is fully aware of the importance of, and the necessity for, robust monitoring in order to target effective Pupil Premium-related interventions. The effective targeting of resources, and the use of research and guidance, are key priorities of Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners. The Strategy states that "leaders need accurate and timely data analysis and tracking systems which identify needs, monitor progress for individual learners and inform target setting for closing the attainment gap. Effective teachers are able to draw on a wide range of evidence-based approaches to meet the needs of all learners".<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid

<sup>117</sup> Macleod, S. et al. (2015) Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Articulating Success and Good Practice. Department for Education, London

<sup>118</sup> Teaching Schools Council and National College for Teaching and Leadership (2016) Effective Pupil Premium Reviews: A Guide Developed by the Teaching Schools Council, London

<sup>119</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone



- 3.2.25. Nonetheless, despite the clear importance of monitoring and tracking systems, it appears that more could be done to identify pupils' needs and close the attainment gap through the use of Pupil Premium funding.
- 3.2.26. While recognising the potential of the Pupil Premium to promote improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged students, the evidence base is still limited, and some schools may waste the funding on ineffective interventions for a number of years without effective challenge.<sup>120</sup>
- 3.2.27. The NAO points out that Ofsted inspections can be infrequent, and believes that the DfE's main intervention to address poor performance is weak.
- 3.2.28. The DfE reviews pupil outcomes but does not routinely monitor early-warning signs of success or failure. It uses attainment data to monitor how well schools are supporting disadvantaged pupils and writes to schools where pupils are performing particularly well or poorly. However, pupil attainment lags behind schools' decisions about using the Pupil Premium. Ofsted summary reports provide some insight into schools' decisions but the DfE 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, and this limits its ability to share best practice or respond to risks on an informed basis.<sup>121</sup>
- 3.2.29. Despite these limitations in Government inspections and reviews, one of the positive by-products of Pupil Premium policies has been an increasing reliance by schools on robust evidence before deciding on Pupil Premium interventions.<sup>122</sup>
- 3.2.30. Historically schools have not been particularly effective in using up-to-date evidence of what works. However, the emergence of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Teaching and Learning Toolkit, which is based on an analysis by Durham University of over 10,000 pieces of research and on randomised control trials, has marked a turning point in the use of evidence by schools. Surveys by NFER for the Sutton Trust found that 5% of all teachers (classroom and leaders) used the Toolkit in 2012, rising to 14% in 2013, and to 27% in 2016. Among senior leaders in secondary schools, use of the Toolkit rose from 48% in 2015 to about 60% in 2016.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> National Audit Office (June 2015) Funding for Disadvantaged Pupils, London

<sup>121</sup> Ibid

<sup>122</sup> Education Policy Institute (2016) Divergent Pathways: The Disadvantage Gap, Accountability and the Pupil Premium, London

<sup>123</sup> Ibid

3.2.31. KCC is actively promoting this good practice. A specific part of Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners encourages all local schools to make the best use of Pupil Premium funding by consistent use of the EEF and Sutton Trust's evidence papers, including the most effective and low-cost strategies in their Teaching and Learning Toolkit.<sup>124</sup>

### **Case Study**

#### **Sacred Heart Catholic School, Camberwell**

#### **National Pupil Premium Award Winner 2017 (Secondary)**

**When deciding how to spend Pupil Premium funding, the school considered the barriers faced by its many disadvantaged pupils. These barriers included: English as an additional language, no experience of higher education within the family and lack of resources within the home to support education.**

**The school's key to success is strong teaching and clear accountability. Also, interventions are targeted efficiently through a "rank order" system which determines each student's level of ability in every subject.**

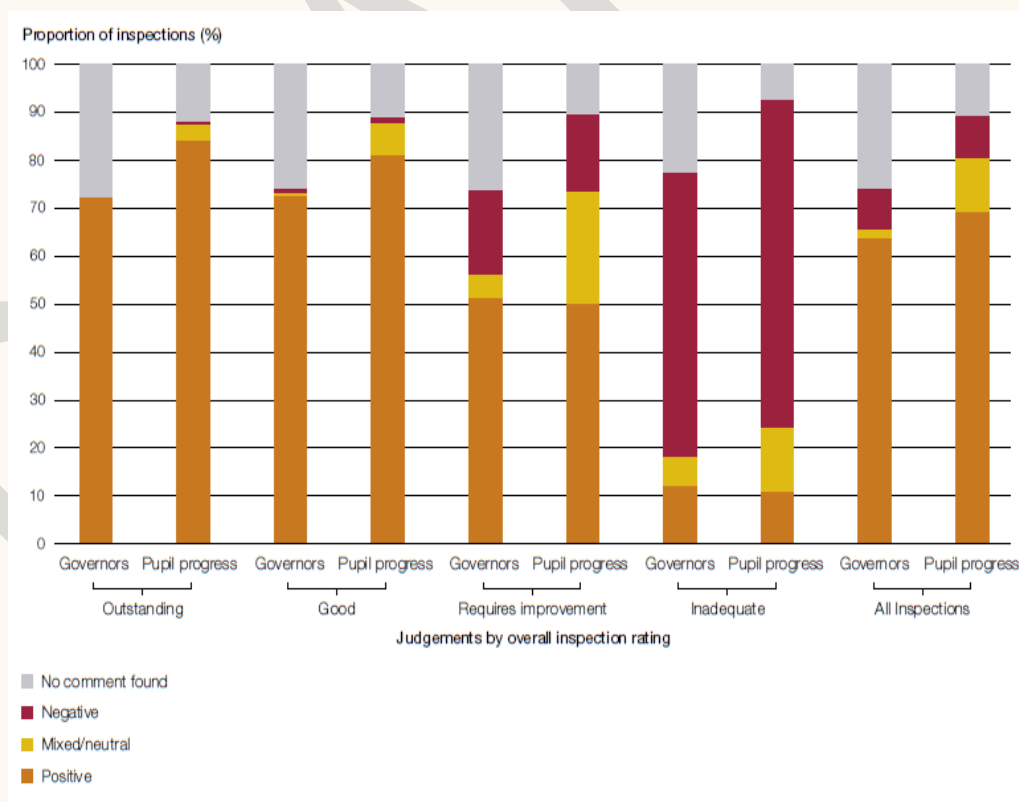
**Students are taught in a calm, ordered environment which is promoted by a robust and measurable system to monitor behaviour. Strong investment in pastoral care ensures that disadvantage learners become confident and resilient. Face-to-face communication and engagement with parents is strongly promoted and incentivised.**

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<sup>124</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

## School governors

- 3.2.32. One of the most effective ways for schools to secure strong monitoring of Pupil Premium spending and interventions is through school governors.
- 3.2.33. Parents of disadvantaged pupils are unlikely to hold a school to account for its use of the Pupil Premium; it is estimated that only 24% of parents in lower socio-economic groups - the principal intended audience - have heard of the policy.<sup>125</sup>
- 3.2.34. School governors, on the other hand, generally hold school leaders to account for how they use the Pupil Premium, and the evidence suggests that most do so effectively. When analysing recent inspection reports, Ofsted commented positively on the quality of school governance with regard to the Pupil Premium in two thirds of inspections. Governance was most likely to be poor in schools that Ofsted judged inadequate and where the progress of disadvantaged pupils was poor (Figure 6, see also Appendix 3).<sup>126</sup>



**Figure 6: School governors' oversight of Pupil Premium funding and disadvantaged pupils' progress, 2015**

<sup>125</sup> National Audit Office (June 2015) Funding for Disadvantaged Pupils, London

<sup>126</sup> Ibid

**Source:** National Audit Office's analysis of Ofsted reports, 2015

- 3.2.35. It was suggested to the Committee that schools should be held to account for the use of Pupil Premium funding, particularly where they are failing to publish information about its use and impact on their websites; this is now a requirement for all maintained schools.<sup>127</sup>
- 3.2.36. The role of school governors in promoting effective use of Pupil Premium funding can be improved. According to Ofsted, while governors are generally informed about their funding, they do not always play a full part in making decisions about its allocation, or in discussing its impact.<sup>128</sup>
- 3.2.37. The EPI echoes this concern, and recommends that governors increase their scrutiny of the performance of disadvantaged pupils and ensure that peer support is requested from schools with a strong track record in this respect.<sup>129</sup>
- 3.2.38. The EPI also recommends, following good practice gathered from national and regional events to share experiences, that Pupil Premium training should be provided to governors.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>128</sup> Ofsted (2013) The Pupil Premium: How Schools Are Spending the Funding Successfully to Maximise Achievement, Manchester

<sup>129</sup> Education Policy Institute (2016) Divergent Pathways: The Disadvantage Gap, Accountability and the Pupil Premium, London

<sup>130</sup> Ibid

- 3.2.39. Local evidence gathered by the Committee through hearings and visits seems to confirm the central role of governors in securing effective use of Pupil Premium funding.
- 3.2.40. Successful Kent schools regard the role of governors in ensuring accountability on this issue as paramount, and indicate that they secure strong monitoring through robust and regular tracking systems.<sup>131 132 133</sup>
- 3.2.41. The above evidence also reflects the findings of a previous KCC select committee on Grammar Schools and Social Mobility, which recommended that Kent schools nominate a lead governor with responsibility for the Pupil Premium funding.<sup>134</sup>
- 3.2.42. The Pupil Premium Select Committee endorses this conclusion. It recognises both the importance of monitoring Pupil Premium funding, and the central role that governors play in securing accountability and ensuring that funding is allocated to the most effective interventions.
- 3.2.43. The Committee also believes that governors can play a key role in securing a smoother transition for disadvantaged children between primary and secondary school. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, what happens in the first few weeks and months of the transition can affect psychological adjustment and academic attainment.<sup>135</sup> The Committee found that the transition could be improved through better exchange of information about these children and their specific needs.<sup>136 137</sup>
- 3.2.44. In light of the above the Committee recommends the following.

### Recommendation 2

**Many Kent schools identify one school governor to act as champion for all children in receipt of any type of Pupil Premium. The Committee recommends that this good practice is shared by all Kent schools.**

**The governor should:**

- **be responsible for monitoring the allocation of Pupil Premium funding and its impact**
- **raise awareness of this funding amongst the rest of the governing body**
- **attend regular Pupil Premium training to keep up-to-date with policy developments in this area.**
- **encourage better exchange of information between schools to promote a smoother transition.**

<sup>131</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 20 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>132</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 20 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>133</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 20 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>134</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 20 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>135</sup> Rice, F. et al (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 20 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>136</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, school visits, 9 November 2017

<sup>137</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 20 November 2017, Maidstone

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## 4. Teaching and Parental Engagement

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Strong and passionate school leadership and good quality teaching are essential to raising the academic achievement of vulnerable pupils and narrowing the attainment gap. Not all schools are equally effective in breaking the link between disadvantage and poor academic performance. The sharing, between schools, of information and good practice strategies and interventions is vital to making the best use of Pupil Premium funding.

But schools alone cannot be expected to break the link between disadvantage and low academic achievement. Parenting style, the home learning environment and high aspirations all strongly influence children's school readiness and academic achievement. Also, close collaboration between schools and other services, such as the Early Help and Preventative Service, can improve educational outcomes for vulnerable children and young people by removing barriers to their engagement and learning.

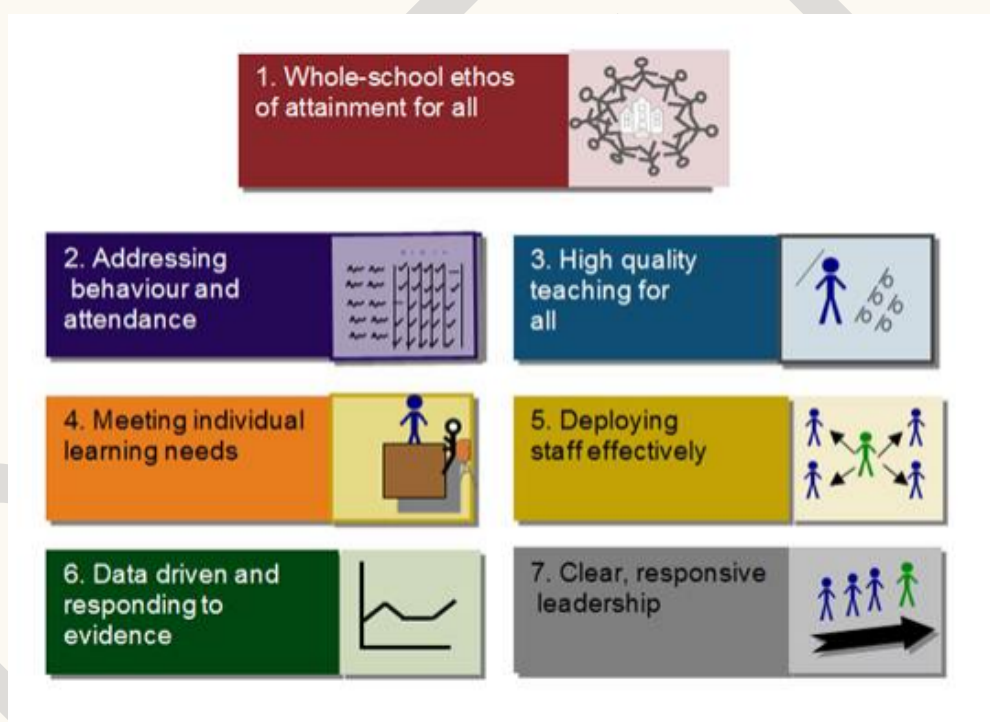


## 4.1. School Leadership and Teaching

### School Leadership

- 4.1.1. The Committee found overwhelming evidence that talented school leadership is an essential factor in driving school improvement and in improving student achievement, particularly for the most disadvantaged pupils.
- 4.1.2. A recent report commissioned by the DfE identifies good practice in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils through seven “Building Blocks for Success”. Having clear and responsive leadership, promoting an ethos of attainment for all pupils and focusing on high quality teaching are amongst these key blocks.<sup>138</sup> (see figure 7 below, and also Appendix 3)

**Figure 7: Building Blocks for Success**



<sup>138</sup> Macleod, S. et al. (2015) Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Articulating Success and Good Practice. Department for Education, London

**Source:** Macleod, S. et al. (2015) Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Articulating Success and Good Practice. Department for Education, London

4.1.3. The report argues that successful schools:

- See raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils as part of their commitment to helping all pupils achieve their full potential.
- Prioritise quality teaching for all, seeing attendance, behaviour and emotional support as necessary but not sufficient for academic success.
- Make every effort to understand every pupil as an individual and tailor their programmes accordingly.
- Link teaching and learning interventions to classroom work, monitor attainment and intervene quickly to address learning needs.
- Ensure that teaching assistants have the necessary training and expertise to make interventions, provide feedback and monitor progress.<sup>139</sup>

4.1.4. The report also identifies a number of barriers in less successful schools. These include: low expectations of what it is possible for disadvantaged pupils to achieve, and the belief of their school leaders that it is impractical to develop individual plans to meet pupils' learning needs.<sup>140</sup>

4.1.5. An Ofsted evidence report indicates that good leadership – and particularly good leadership of teaching and learning – makes the biggest difference to school standards. The report found that talented

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid

<sup>140</sup> Ibid

leadership is particularly important in schools that serve the most disadvantaged communities.<sup>141</sup>

4.1.6. The report argues that high quality leadership is essential to promoting, supporting and sustaining the drive to improving teaching and maximising learning in schools that face tough challenges. However, it also points out that in many areas of the country there is a shortage of high quality leaders, with schools in the most challenging circumstances often the most acutely affected. The report warns that, if achievement gaps between the highest and lowest performing areas of the country are to be closed, more of the best school leaders will need to be encouraged to work in challenging contexts.<sup>142</sup>

4.1.7. The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission indicates that the best performing schools have an inclusive culture of expecting the best from every child, regardless of their background. Although those performing well for disadvantaged students do so in different ways, there is a common mindset; one in which leaders use evidence carefully, look beyond their local context, seek to compare themselves with the best and are ambitious in how they define success.<sup>143</sup>

4.1.8. Local evidence supports these national findings. A recent research project – Learning from Success - looked at the strategies and interventions that a number of very successful Kent schools - where the disadvantaged pupils were outperforming non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in combined reading, writing and mathematics results - were using to accelerate the progress and attainment of vulnerable students.

4.1.9. Key factors for the success of these schools included a transparent school ethos, a communication strategy within the school that was exceptionally well planned and delivered, and an excellent and relentless leadership in the implementation, monitoring and focus on the school's priorities.<sup>144</sup>

4.1.10. Evidence gathered in local school visits confirmed these findings. Reasons given for these schools' success at raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils included:

- a positive attitude of the school's leadership and teachers
- the importance of giving confidence to children and raising their aspirations through non-academic activities such as, confidence classes and drama

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<sup>141</sup> Ofsted (2013) Unseen Children: Access and Achievement 20 Years on. Evidence Report, Manchester

<sup>142</sup> Ibid

<sup>143</sup> Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) Cracking the Code: How Schools Can Improve Social Mobility, London

<sup>144</sup> Mitchell, T. (2017) Learning From Success. A Research Paper: How Strategic Leadership Effectively Diminishes Differences for Disadvantaged Pupils in Successful Kent Schools

- investing in teachers' professional development.<sup>145</sup>

4.1.11. All of these findings are reflected in Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners. A key priority of the Strategy is to promote a "relentless ambition to succeed" in local schools. As the Strategy puts it:

*"Schools have a critical community leadership role and can have a significant impact on the community's development and sometimes regeneration of a local area in securing outcomes for this and future generations of children, young people and their families. Changing learners' mind-sets about their own ability and the value of education itself is crucial to improving outcomes for vulnerable learners. This includes setting a new cultural standard, giving opportunities for new ways of behaving and building new relationships between the school and the community, especially with local employers".<sup>146</sup>*

### Teaching

4.1.12. Together with a clear and responsive leadership that promotes an ethos of attainment for all pupils, there is widespread agreement that high quality teaching is also essential to promoting social mobility and closing the attainment gap.

4.1.13. The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission argues that the provision of highly effective teaching is perhaps the single most important way schools can influence social mobility.<sup>147</sup>

4.1.14. First, because high quality teaching is directly related to improving student outcomes. The difference in outcome between a very effective teacher and an ineffective one is large. For example, during one year with a very effective maths teacher, pupils gain 40% more in their learning than they would with a poorly performing one.<sup>148</sup>

4.1.15. Second, because high quality teaching has a particular impact on the most disadvantaged students. Evidence shows that, over a school year, disadvantaged pupils can gain 1.5 years' worth of learning with very effective teachers, compared with 0.5 years with poorly performing teachers. In other words, for disadvantaged students, the difference between a good teacher and a bad teacher can be a whole year's learning.<sup>149</sup>

4.1.16. The importance of high quality teaching for disadvantaged pupils is accepted by the DfE. It advocates that leaders of more successful schools emphasise the importance of 'quality teaching first'. This entails providing a consistently high standard through setting expectations,

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<sup>145</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, school visits, 9 November 2017

<sup>146</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>147</sup> Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) Cracking the Code: How Schools Can Improve Social Mobility, London

<sup>148</sup> Ibid

<sup>149</sup> Ibid

monitoring performance, tailoring teaching and support to suit their pupils, and sharing best practice.<sup>150</sup>

4.1.17. Evidence from Ofsted also confirms these findings. It argues that high quality teaching is especially important for disadvantaged pupils, because it makes a crucial difference to their learning and achievement, and that recruiting the best teachers to schools serving disadvantaged pupils is still a priority.<sup>151</sup>

4.1.18. In Kent it is recognised that high quality teaching is crucial to helping disadvantaged pupils make faster progress and to closing the attainment gap.

4.1.19. A recent research project aimed at identifying the strategies and interventions used by a number of very successful local schools found that a relentless focus on Quality First Teaching was crucial. The project found that, in all of the schools visited, the most common feature of the strategic leadership was a strive and a passion for outstanding teaching.<sup>152</sup>

4.1.20. Several witnesses highlighted the importance of recruiting and developing high calibre teachers in order to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged pupils in Kent. They also stressed the essential role played by specialist staff, in areas such as behaviour and speech and language therapy.<sup>153 154 155 156</sup>

4.1.21. Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners recognises the crucial role that good teachers play; it points out that "one of the key lessons from research about closing the achievement gap is to build on high quality teaching for all learners, rather than focus on other one-off activities and events outside school hours".<sup>157</sup>

4.1.22. The Strategy refers to evidence from the Sutton Trust, the EEF and the DfE, which shows that significant improvements can be made in narrowing the gap by activities such as:

- improving feedback between teachers and learners
- paired teaching
- small group teaching
- one-to-one tuition
- independent learning strategies

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<sup>150</sup> Macleod, S. et al. (2015) Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Articulating Success and Good Practice. Department for Education, London

<sup>151</sup> Ofsted (2013) Unseen Children: Access and Achievement 20 Years on. Evidence Report, Manchester

<sup>152</sup> Mitchell, T. (2017) Learning From Success. A Research Paper: How Strategic Leadership Effectively Diminishes Differences for Disadvantaged Pupils in Successful Kent Schools

<sup>153</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, school visits, 9 November 2017

<sup>154</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 21 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>155</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 15 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>156</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 17 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>157</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

- peer mentoring.<sup>158</sup>

### Sharing Best Practice

- 4.1.23. Responsive and passionate leadership and good quality teaching are central to promoting academic achievement and closing the attainment gap. However, not all schools are equally effective in breaking the link between disadvantage and poor performance.
- 4.1.24. The DfE reports that, for example, some schools are doing much better than others with a similar intake.<sup>159</sup> The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission states that, if all secondary schools did as well as the best performing school with a similar intake (based on the attainment of pupils entering the school), the number of pupils achieving five good GCSEs, including English and maths, would be 37% higher.<sup>160</sup>

***“...if all secondary schools did as well as the best performing school with a similar intake...the number of pupils achieving five good GCSEs, including English and maths, would be 37% higher.”***

- 4.1.25. The Committee believes that successful school leaders and teachers in Kent have a responsibility to share their strategies and interventions that help to narrow the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers, and that it is the responsibility of less effective schools to use them.

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid

<sup>159</sup> Sharp, C. et al (2015) Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: A Briefing Paper, London

<sup>160</sup> Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) Cracking the Code: How Schools Can Improve Social Mobility, London

- 4.1.26. There is a good deal of evidence that greater sharing of best practice would be valuable.
- 4.1.27. Research conducted on behalf of the DfE indicates that senior leaders in more successful schools tend to share their thinking and work collaboratively with staff, pupils, families and the local community. They ensure their schools are linked into a number of networks such as local school clusters, teaching school networks and online forums, and constantly seek out new ideas and put systems in place to share best practice.<sup>161</sup>
- 4.1.28. In October 2015 the Public Accounts Committee published a report on funding for disadvantaged pupils. One of its recommendations was that the DfE should “develop the necessary mechanisms to make sure schools use effective interventions with disadvantaged pupils” and share best practice<sup>162</sup>. In its response later that year, the Government agreed and highlighted the role of the EEF and the Pupil Premium Awards.<sup>163</sup>
- 4.1.29. The NAO reports that although best practice information is increasingly available, evidence of the cost-effectiveness of some commonly used approaches is relatively weak.<sup>164</sup>
- 4.1.30. The EEF disseminates existing and emerging research through its Teaching and Learning Toolkit. Designed for quick reference, this lists interventions according to their known effectiveness in supporting learning, their cost, and the quality of the research underpinning them. However, only 64% of school leaders use the Toolkit.<sup>165</sup> As the EEF puts it, “nationally the attainment gap remains large and persistent and will only be narrowed by ensuring that good practice is shared amongst schools”.<sup>166</sup>

***“...nationally the attainment gap remains large and persistent and will only be narrowed by ensuring that good practice is shared amongst schools.”***

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<sup>161</sup> Sharp, C. et al (2015) Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Briefing for School Leaders, London

<sup>162</sup> Public Accounts Committee (9 Oct 2015) Funding for Disadvantaged Pupils, HC 327

<sup>163</sup> HM Treasury (Dec 2015) Treasury Minutes: Government responses on the First to the Third reports from the Committee of Public Accounts: Session 2015-16

<sup>164</sup> National Audit Office (2015) Funding for Disadvantaged Pupils, London

<sup>165</sup> Ibid

<sup>166</sup> Education Endowment Foundation (2014) EEF Response to Ofsted Pupil Premium Report, online, <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/index.php/news/eef-response-to-ofsted-pupil-premium-report/>

4.1.31. The importance of sharing best practice is reiterated and promoted by KCC. For instance, one of the aims of the School Improvement Strategy is to encourage the sharing of best practice through school to school support, and to promote growth cultures in schools which ensure that more vulnerable pupils receive a good education.<sup>167</sup>

4.1.32. Some of the ways in which the local authority strives to disseminate best practice across Kent include:

- frequent communication of KCC's values and expectations with reference to Pupil Premium Toolkits, the effective use of performance data, the Vulnerable Learners Strategy and the use of Case Studies
- guest speakers from highly effective schools at Kent's Pupil Premium courses and conferences
- Journey to Outstanding Programme – linking good schools with outstanding schools to share all aspects of best practice.
- The development of the Kelsi website to host best practice case studies and strategies from our most successful schools.<sup>168</sup>

**4.1.33. In summary, the Committee believes that strong and passionate school leadership, good quality teaching, and the sharing of good practice, are all essential to raising the academic achievement of vulnerable pupils and narrowing the attainment gap.**

4.1.34. School leaders and teachers, as well as the local authority and other organisations, should play a central role in disseminating good practice across the county. Chapter 6 will discuss the dissemination of good practice in more detail, and will identify some of the most effective strategies and interventions.

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<sup>167</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>168</sup> Ibid



## 4.2. Parental Engagement and Aspirations

- 4.2.1. Parenting style, the home learning environment, and high aspirations strongly influence children's school readiness and academic achievement.
- 4.2.2. Recent research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation emphasises the importance of parental involvement as a causal influence on their children's school readiness and subsequent attainment. It is essential, therefore, that parents and carers are encouraged, supported and expected to play their full part in their children's education.<sup>169</sup>
- 4.2.3. "Parenting style" has been identified as a major factor behind the weaker performance of low income children compared with their better off peers. Among the most important features of parenting style are maternal sensitivity and responsiveness, knowledge of child development, discipline, and rules.<sup>170</sup>
- 4.2.4. One study has suggested that parenting style can account for 19% of the gap in mathematics, 21% of the gap in literacy and 33% of the gap in language.<sup>171</sup> The home learning environment also has a considerable impact on cognitive school readiness, accounting for between 16% and 21% of the gap between low income children and their better off peers.<sup>172</sup>
- 4.2.5. The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) longitudinal study (2004) found that the quality of the home learning environment is more important for the intellectual and social

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<sup>169</sup> Carter-Wall, C. and Whitfield, G. (2012) The Role of Aspirations, Attitudes and Behaviour in Closing the Educational Attainment Gap, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York

<sup>170</sup> Waldfogel, J. And Washbrook, E. (2008) Early Years Policy. Paper Prepared for the Sutton Trust/Carnegie Corporation Summit on Social Mobility

<sup>171</sup> Ibid

<sup>172</sup> Pascal, c. And Bertram, A. (2013) The Impact of Early Education As a Strategy for Counteracting Socio Economic Disadvantage, background paper prepared for Ofsted's Access and Achievement 2013 review

development of children than parental occupation, education or income.  
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- 4.2.6. A recent study of the role of language in children's early educational outcomes found that the communication environment is a more dominant predictor of early language than social background.<sup>174</sup>
- 4.2.7. There is a social class disparity when it comes to engagement with children's education. Nowadays families where both parents are highly educated spend on average 110 minutes a day on educational activities with their young children, compared to just 71 minutes where parents have low levels of education. In the 1970s parents were spending only 20–30 minutes but there were no significant differences between income groups.<sup>175</sup>
- 4.2.8. Today, family life is under strain, particularly for parents on low incomes. They are often struggling to cope with multiple jobs and unsociable hours, so they face both time and resource constraints in providing their children with the range of experiences they need in order to develop.<sup>176</sup> However, children from affluent families - where both parents work long hours and are not always available to support them - can face similar difficulties.<sup>177</sup>
- 4.2.9. Developing aspirational cultures and encouraging parental engagement and involvement are strategic priorities for KCC.
- 4.2.10. Central to this ambition is the work of KCC's Early Help and Preventative Service, which works closely with schools, and through services such as Children's Centres and the Inclusion and Attendance Service, to improve educational outcomes for vulnerable children and young people by removing barriers to their learning and engagement.<sup>178</sup>
- 4.2.11. The provision of parenting programmes includes a bespoke Kent Parenting Programme called 'Understanding Yourself, Understanding Your Child', which is now delivered in every district in Kent. The programme has received an enhanced Quality Mark through Laser Learning Awards and is subject to regular internal and external Quality Assurance.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Sylva, K. et al (2004) The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education Project: Final report. UK: Institute of Education, University of London

<sup>174</sup> Roulstone, S. Et al (2011) Investigating the Role of Language in Children's Early Education Outcomes, research report DFE-RR 134

<sup>175</sup> Social Mobility Commission (2016) State of the Nation 2016: Social Mobility in Great Britain, London

<sup>176</sup> Ibid

<sup>177</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 21 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>178</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>179</sup> Ibid

- 4.2.12. As well as being spread more widely, more parenting courses are now delivered through Community Learning and Skills settings, cutting waiting times and ensuring that courses are delivered in a timely way.<sup>180</sup>
- 4.2.13. Finally, CYPE introduced the 'Enhancing Family Involvement in Children's Learning (EFICL) Toolkit for Early Years and Childcare providers to raise parental and family involvement in children's learning. The programme won the Nursery World Award 2016 for Staff Resources and the Early Years Excellence Award 2017.<sup>181</sup>
- 4.2.14. The Committee endorses and applauds the work of the Early Help and Preventative Service, through parenting programmes, in seeking to promote parental engagement and academic attainment. Nonetheless, the Committee found that students' attendance rates in Kent remain a concern and that partnership work between the Service and schools can be improved.
- 4.2.15. KCC's Early Help and Preventative Service is successful; a recent Ofsted inspection found the Service's overall effectiveness to be 'Good'. Staff have meaningful relationships with children and know them well, Early Help assessments are generally good, and the plans put in place for families are well targeted and set clear expectations for parents and professionals.<sup>182</sup>
- 4.2.16. Nonetheless, it appears that pupils' school attendance rates can be raised. This could have a significant impact on outcomes, particularly for vulnerable groups where early indications of other more serious underlying problems can be reflected in poor attendance.
- 4.2.17. There have been some improvements in attendance for particular groups of students in Kent. For example, the Inclusion Support Service Kent reports that two years ago the attendance rates of pupils from the GRT communities - who have the lowest attainment and highest absence rates of any ethnic group - was worse than the national average. The latest DfE data shows that Kent GRT children's attendance rate is now 88%, compared with the national average of 82.5%, and that Travellers of Irish Heritage children's attendance rate is 82.5%, slightly above the national average of 82.1%.<sup>183</sup>
- 4.2.18. The Committee heard that in one school the appointment of a governor from the GRT community was instrumental in strengthening engagement and communication between the school and that community, as well as promoting attendance of local GRT pupils.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid

<sup>181</sup> Ibid

<sup>182</sup> Ibid

<sup>183</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Tackling Inequalities for GRT Children and Young People in Schools and Settings, Maidstone

<sup>184</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, visit, 17 January 2018

- 4.2.19. In addition, Early Help and Preventative Services is leading an innovative pilot of three integrated multi-agency proactive outreach teams supported by Specialist Children's Services, Schools and Health colleagues across East Kent. The pilot teams will be based in a number of school settings so that children and their families can access services at the earliest opportunity. Amongst its objectives, the pilot aims at improving levels of attendance, reducing the numbers of fixed term exclusions and the number of children on part-time timetables from school.<sup>185</sup>
- 4.2.20. However, national data for 2016-17 shows that, in general, Kent has persistently higher rates of absence than the national average. In primary schools the absence rate was 9.5%, compared to 9.3% in the previous academic year and to a national average of 8.7%. In secondary schools the rate was 13.7%, compared to 13.2% in the previous year and to the national average of 12.8%.<sup>186</sup>
- 4.2.21. In order to address this issue, services have recently been reconfigured to form a single county-wide school attendance enforcement team, with the delivery of intensive interventions moving from Education Welfare Officers and Exclusion Officers to Early Help units.<sup>187</sup>
- 4.2.22. Nevertheless, the Committee believes that enhanced partnership working between Early Help and local schools can contribute to improving attendance rates and parental engagement.
- 4.2.23. Evidence indicates that, although schools can make use of Pupil Premium funding to promote parental engagement, outcomes could be better if their collaboration and communication with Early Help and other services was stronger.<sup>188 189 190</sup> One way in which this could be achieved is to make Early Help support more accessible and rapid by, where possible, locating some of its operations in offices within schools.<sup>191</sup>
- 4.2.24. The Select Committee believes that improving parents' engagement, promoting high aspirations, and increasing pupils' attendance rates, are all crucial to narrowing the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. The Committee commends the work of the Early Help and Preventative Services with regard to parenting programmes, and recommends that the provision of Early Help services within local schools should be strengthened.

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<sup>185</sup> Kent County Council (2018) East Kent Integrated School Support Pilot, online: <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/news-and-events/news/primary/east-kent-integrated-school-support-pilot>

<sup>186</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>187</sup> Ibid

<sup>188</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, school visits, 9 November 2017

<sup>189</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 17 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>190</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 15 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>191</sup> Ibid

### **Recommendation 3**

**KCC's Early Help and Preventative Services team should increase the provision and presence of its services within local schools' premises by locating some of its operations within those settings.**

## **4.3. Transition**

- 4.3.1. Leaving one setting and starting another can be a daunting experience for a young person. There are two key transition points for young people – nursery to primary school, and primary to secondary. Changes mean a new place, new friends and new routines, all of which can be a cause of anxiety for a young person. “Effective transition procedures require careful planning and should be rooted in a clear understanding of young children's social, emotional and intellectual needs”.<sup>192</sup> Having a strategic plan in place at points of transition has a high impact on outcomes and destinations.<sup>193</sup>
- 4.3.2. There needs to be a focus on narrowing the attainment gap by ensuring that children in the early years who are at risk of poorer outcomes have their needs identified as soon as possible. It then follows that there needs to be continuity and progression of learning by improving current approaches to transition. These priorities are identified in Kent's Early Year's and Childcare Strategy, along with new approaches for achieving them.<sup>194</sup>
- 4.3.3. Early Years providers rated “Outstanding” have a real focus on preparing children for school in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding, as well as attitudes to learning.<sup>195</sup> The Committee heard from one nursery that used a progress tracker to monitor children individually, this was then passed on to the child's primary school when they transferred. As a feeder nursery to 11 primary schools, the setting also worked with each school, as well as parents, to ensure the children were ready to transfer. This included information about how the EYPP supported individual children.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Nursery World (2006), Transition Between Settings, online, <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/nursery-world/news/1080194/transition-settings>

<sup>193</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>194</sup> Kent County Council (2016) Early years and childcare strategy 2016-2019, Maidstone

<sup>195</sup> Ofsted (2016) The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2015/16

<sup>196</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

- 4.3.4. The transition from primary to secondary school is an important life change that can have a long-term impact on children’s attainment and wellbeing. What happens in the first weeks and months of this transition can affect psychological adjustment and academic attainment beyond the school years.<sup>197</sup> Yet transition from primary to secondary school continues to be a point where some pupils begin to fall behind. There can be mistrust between primary and secondary schools around transition. This contributes to a failure to share information about assessment and the curriculum, or to fully understand it when it is shared.<sup>198</sup>
- 4.3.5. According to a major longitudinal study into the influence of pre-school, primary and secondary school on children’s cognitive and social/behavioural development in England, successful transitions between key stages “are key drivers to raising standards”. Where the transfer is strongest, the “social, emotional, curricular and pedagogical aspects of learning are managed in order to enable pupils to remain engaged with, and have control of, their learning”. The research also had found that children who felt they had had a lot of help from their secondary school to settle in were more likely to have a successful transition.<sup>199</sup>
- 4.3.6. The School Transition and Adjustment Research Study (STARS) (2014), conducted by University College London, found that “successful transitions to secondary school are likely to be multi-dimensional and include aspects of academic performance, behavioural involvement, perceptions of school, and affective experiences in school”. The study established that a successful transition involves functioning well in two areas: being academically and behaviourally involved in the school; and feeling a sense of belonging to the school.<sup>200</sup>
- 4.3.7. The study shows that children’s psychological adjustment affects their academic attainment, and that support during the transition process is beneficial to both their pastoral and academic needs.<sup>201</sup>

***“...support during the transition process is beneficial to both their pastoral and academic needs.”***

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<sup>197</sup> Rice, F. et al (2014) Identifying Factors That Predict Successful and Difficult Transitions to Secondary School, University College London/Nuffield Foundation

<sup>198</sup> Ofsted (2016) The Annual Report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills 2015/16

<sup>199</sup> Evangelou, M. Et al (2008) Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education 3-14 Project: What Makes a Successful Transition from Primary to Secondary School? University of Oxford, Institute of Education, University of London, Birkbeck, University of London and University of Nottingham

<sup>200</sup> Rice, F. et al (2014) Identifying Factors That Predict Successful and Difficult Transitions to Secondary School, University College London/Nuffield Foundation

<sup>201</sup> Ibid

4.3.8. Although transfers between all key stages present challenges, the transition from primary to secondary school is the most difficult for schools, pupils and families. The reasons for this include the following:

- Transition typically occurs at age 11 and coincides with biological changes and the start of adolescence.
- Pupils have to negotiate a more challenging school setting with unfamiliar academic structures and increased expectations upon them.
- Changes in social interactions with both teachers and peers.<sup>202</sup>

4.3.9. With regard to disadvantaged pupils, Ofsted found that many schools are not using their Pupil Premium funding effectively to close gaps quickly in Key Stage 3. In just under half of the schools in a sample of monitoring inspections, inspectors found the impact of Pupil Premium funding in Key Stage 3 to be weak. Of all the school leaders interviewed, only a very small proportion spoke specifically about what they were doing in Key Stage 3 to ensure that achievement gaps closed as quickly as possible when pupils started secondary school. About one in ten said that they had a Pupil Premium champion in their school, but only one of them spent time in their feeder primary schools.<sup>203</sup>

4.3.10. KCC is working with different partners to ensure that school transitions are supported and that improving outcomes for vulnerable learners is given the highest priority across all KCC services, schools and other education settings. A key aspect of this work has been the focus on coordinating district activities, service delivery and collaborations to target resources to achieve greater impact.<sup>204</sup>

4.3.11. This focus is also reflected in a recognition of the importance of improving the mental health and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable learners. This has led, for example, to a re-commissioning of Kent Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to work directly in schools and in Early Help units.<sup>205</sup>

4.3.12. However, the findings of the Committee suggest that better information sharing between Kent primary and secondary schools could lead to a smoother transition for disadvantaged pupils.

4.3.13. The Committee was disappointed to hear of vulnerable children who were well-adjusted in primary school not making good progress in secondary school because of insufficient support. It was suggested that the transition could be improved through better exchange of information

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<sup>202</sup> Lewisham Council (2017) Overview and Scrutiny: Review of Transition from Primary to Secondary School, Lewisham

<sup>203</sup> Ofsted (2015) Key Stage 3: The Wasted Years?, Manchester

<sup>204</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>205</sup> Ibid

about these children and their specific needs, and through better tracking between the two phases.<sup>206</sup> <sup>207</sup> <sup>208</sup> The Committee believes that this could be promoted through an event that involves KCC services, local schools and partner organisations.

4.3.14. The Committee also believes that better information sharing could help to identify pupils who may be eligible for FSM and Pupil Premium funding in secondary school.

4.3.15. In short, improved communication between Kent primary and secondary schools could lead to a better detection of vulnerable children who are entitled to Pupil Premium funding, better identification of their specific needs, and better academic attainment in secondary schools in the county. The Committee therefore recommends the following.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**KCC's Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should continue to actively promote better information sharing between Kent Early Years providers, primary and secondary schools in order to facilitate a smoother transition for disadvantaged children and to provide them with the academic and pastoral support that meets their specific needs.**

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<sup>206</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 17 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>207</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, school visits, 9 November 2017

<sup>208</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 20 November 2017, Maidstone



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## 5. Early Years, Children in Care and Service Children

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The attainment gap is well established by the time a child goes to school. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to have the knowledge, skills and understanding that their non-disadvantaged peers have, because of their more limited opportunities and experiences. The Early Years Pupil Premium

targets disadvantaged three and four-year olds, but the rate providers receive is much lower than other types of Pupil Premium. Its impact is therefore limited.

Children in Care face a number of barriers to learning. Although the attainment gap in Kent between these children and their peers remains wide, in recent years it has narrowed and is now better than the national average. A large number of Children in Care in Kent originate from other local authorities, which retain Corporate Parenting responsibility for them. Too many of these children are not receiving the support they are entitled to.

Service Children are supported by the Service Pupil Premium, which is intended to pay for pastoral support and mitigate the impact of mobility and parental deployment. Although far fewer schools receive this funding than receive the other types of Pupil Premium, the needs of these children must be championed by the school if they are to flourish in their education and home-life.

## 5.1. Early Years

- 5.1.1. Research undertaken by the DfE shows that the impact of Early Years education is significant and long-lived. In general, children who attend pre-school (compared to those who do not) are likely to achieve higher grades in GCSE English and maths and are more likely to continue to A/AS level<sup>209</sup>.

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<sup>209</sup> DfE (Sept 2014) Students' Educational and Developmental Outcomes at Age 16

5.1.2. However, there is still a stubborn gap between the attainment of disadvantaged children and their peers.<sup>210</sup> Research shows that two-fifths of this gap is present by the time a child reaches the age of five.<sup>211</sup> <sup>212</sup> This suggests that there is a pressing need for intervention even before children start formal schooling.<sup>213</sup>

5.1.3. Ofsted states that “nearly half of the children from disadvantaged backgrounds have not secured the essential knowledge, skills and understanding expected for their age by the time they finish Reception Year”. These skills include communication, emotional control, and adaptability to new environments, all of which have a significant impact on a child’s ability to learn.<sup>214</sup> A key factor in the development of these skills is access to opportunities and experiences which may be more limited for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.<sup>215</sup>

***“If we get the early years right, we pave the way for a lifetime of achievement. If we get them wrong, we miss a unique opportunity to shape a child’s future.”***

**Source:** Ofsted (July 2016), Unknown Children – Destined for Disadvantage

5.1.4. In April 2015 the Government introduced the Early Years Pupil Premium to provide additional funding for three and four-year-old children whose parents received certain benefits or who had been in care or adopted from care. The purpose of EYPP is to ensure that disadvantaged children make faster progress in closing the attainment gap with their peers. Early years providers receive up to £302 per year for each eligible child. The amount paid depends on the number of hours of childcare provided. In 2017/18, Kent received £424,000 to support 1,400 children eligible for EYPP.<sup>216</sup>

5.1.5. The EYPP complements the Government funded Early Education Entitlement, an initiative designed to help reduce levels of inequality by providing free Early Years places for the most disadvantaged pupils. Around 6,000 of Kent’s two-year olds are eligible for free early education,<sup>217</sup> and the take-up in November 2017 was 67.4%.<sup>218</sup> The eligibility criteria for two-year olds differ slightly from those for EYPP;

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<sup>210</sup> EPI (2016) Divergent Pathways

<sup>211</sup> Ofsted (2013) Unseen Children: Access and Achievement 20 years on (Evidence Report), Manchester

<sup>212</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 13 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>213</sup> EPI (2016) Divergent Pathways

<sup>214</sup> Ofsted (July 2016) Unknown Children – Destined for Disadvantage? Manchester

<sup>215</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 17 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>216</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent’s Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>217</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent’s Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>218</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Children and Young People and Education Cabinet Committee, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Maidstone

children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, or Statement of Special Educational Needs, or receiving Disability Living Allowance, are eligible for a free childcare place but not EYPP.<sup>219</sup>

5.1.6. KCC recognises the importance of the Early Years and aims to ensure that EYPP is used effectively.<sup>220</sup> In general, providers are confident that the EYPP is delivering added value by allowing them to provide experiences and development aids that would otherwise have been unaffordable.<sup>221 222</sup>

5.1.7. Benefits of the EYPP:

- The increased focus on eligible children enables frontline staff to consider ways of providing better support for vulnerable children.<sup>223 224</sup>
- The additional staff resources and training funded by EYPP allows providers to target support to the learning and development needs of eligible children.<sup>225</sup>
- The additional resources enable interventions to be targeted. For example, funds have been used to provide transport so that children could continue to attend nursery whilst their parents were experiencing difficulties. Additional resources have also been used to encourage parental engagement as they can be taken home to promote activities such as reading.<sup>226</sup>
- The ability to fund specialist interventions which can benefit many children such as 'I Can Talk', which one provider estimated had resulted in a narrowing of the attainment gap by six weeks, and also improved self-confidence and self-esteem.<sup>227</sup>

## Speech, Language and Communication

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<sup>219</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Free childcare for 2 year olds, online, <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/childcare-and-pre-school/free-childcare/free-childcare-for-2-year-olds>

<sup>220</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>221</sup> DfE (Jan 2017) Study of Early Education and Development: Experiences of Early Years Pupil Premium

<sup>222</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>223</sup> DfE (Jan 2017) Study of Early Education and Development: Experiences of Early Years Pupil Premium

<sup>224</sup> Early Education (2016) Practical Tips on Allocating Early Years Pupil Premium Funding, London

<sup>225</sup> DfE (Jan 2017) Study of Early Education and Development: Experiences of Early Years Pupil Premium

<sup>226</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>227</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

- 5.1.8. A recurring theme in the use of EYPP is supporting speech, language and communication needs.<sup>228</sup> Evidence suggests that these skills are critical to a child’s development – as previously mentioned, two-fifths of the attainment gap is present before primary school<sup>229</sup> - and Kent schools that have been effective in narrowing the attainment gap have “highly effective speech and language support”.<sup>230</sup> Witnesses agreed on the importance of early speech and language support.<sup>231 232 233</sup>
- 5.1.9. The need to provide effective support in developing communication skills is well recognised, but strategies for doing so vary according to the size of the provider. Larger providers, with more eligible students, may be able to pay for a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) to help eligible students. Some smaller providers have overcome the limitation of their funding by banding together to afford this, and by training existing staff.<sup>234</sup> For example, one school with a nursery introduces phonics lessons from when a child starts in nursery, and all its teaching assistants are phonics specialists.<sup>235</sup>
- 5.1.10. Speech and Language Therapy is a service mainly provided by the NHS. However, there are a number of interventions that improve communication skills that are offered by charities and other organisations.
- 5.1.11. One example is the charity “I Can”, whose mission is to develop children’s communication skills and, as part of this, it offers a range of interventions and programmes.<sup>236</sup> “Early Talk Boost” is a targeted intervention (which runs for nine weeks at a cost of £520) aimed at 3-4 year old children with delayed language development which helps them to boost their language skills and narrow the gap between them and their peers.<sup>237</sup>
- 5.1.12. The Committee believes that KCC should promote additional speech and language provision in pre-school settings. This could be achieved by pooling budgets and by cascading training between these settings and primary schools.

### Recommendation 5

**KCC’s Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should explore opportunities to support and promote additional speech and language provision in pre-school settings, including working with the NHS as a key partner and organisations in the voluntary sector.**

<sup>228</sup> DfE (Jan 2017) Pupil Premium

<sup>229</sup> Ofsted (2013) Pupil Premium  
Manchester

<sup>230</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent’s Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>231</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 17 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>232</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>233</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, school visit, 9 November 2017

<sup>234</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>235</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, school visit, 17 January 2018

<sup>236</sup> I Can (2018) About Us, online, <https://www.ican.org.uk/about-us/>

<sup>237</sup> I Can (2018) Practitioners, online, <https://www.ican.org.uk/practitioners/>

## Barriers to the Effectiveness of EYPP

5.1.13. Whilst EYPP has clear benefits, it also has some administrative and other problems.

### Application and administration process

- Smaller providers do not always have the resources to support the administration process, which some consider to be burdensome. The resource intensity of applying was perceived to be excessive in relation to the scale of the funding.<sup>238</sup>
- It is the parent's responsibility to apply for EYPP. This can generate barriers such as "literacy and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) needs, a perceived lack of parental motivation, difficulties with parents providing the right information and potential stigma related to claiming targeted (means-tested) funding."<sup>239</sup>
- Some parents lack the motivation to apply because the money goes directly to the provider and they do not see any direct benefit for their child.<sup>240</sup>
- Unlike Pupil Premium, parents have to re-apply for funding annually. Whilst KCC attempts to address this by seeking permission, during their first application, to hold and re-check eligibility data annually, this is at the parent's discretion.<sup>241</sup>

### Funding

- EYPP funding is calculated each term based on how many eligible children are in a setting. Funding is paid termly in arrears, so every term can be different. This lack of stability in funding can make planning difficult, especially for smaller settings.<sup>242 243</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> DfE (Jan 2017) Study of Early Education and Development: Experiences of Early Years Pupil Premium

<sup>239</sup> Ibid

<sup>240</sup> Ibid

<sup>241</sup> KCC (2017) EYPP Guidance and Information, online, <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/early-years/sufficiency-and-sustainability/free-early-education/early-years-free-entitlement>

<sup>242</sup> DfE (Jan 2017) Study of Early Education and Development: Experiences of Early Years Pupil Premium

<sup>243</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

- Providers are not always notified of how many or which children have been awarded EYPP until the end of term. This can be a barrier to planning.<sup>244</sup>
- Funding rates have not increased since 2015, despite provider costs increasing.<sup>245</sup>
- EYPP is not always sufficient to cover the cost of interventions, particularly if a setting only has a small number of eligible pupils. Some settings use their core budget or fundraising to help pay for more expensive interventions.<sup>246 247</sup>
- EYPP is allocated disproportionately; the maximum entitlement in Early Years is £302 per eligible child, whereas £1,320 is available for each eligible primary school child, and £935 for each eligible secondary school student.<sup>248</sup> The original rationale behind the Pupil Premium rate being higher in primary than in secondary schools was that early intervention was vital, and that it would help disadvantaged children to be "secondary-ready".<sup>249</sup>

### **The Value of Early Years Pupil Premium**

5.1.14. A number of organisations have urged the Government to increase the value of the EYPP.

- The Social Mobility Commission felt that current funding was inadequate for ensuring that all five-year olds are school ready, and recommended doubling the EYPP to £604 per child as well as extending the policy to include disadvantaged two-year olds who are eligible for the 15 hours free childcare entitlement.<sup>250</sup> The Commission proposed that the additional amount should be funded by a re-distribution of the primary school Pupil Premium or from elsewhere within the DfE budget. It argued that primary schools would reap the benefits of having more school-ready children, and a smaller attainment gap to narrow.<sup>251</sup>
- The EPI recommended establishing pilots to test the effectiveness of increasing the value of EYPP. It pointed to international evidence that public investment in education prior to age three can

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<sup>244</sup> DfE (Jan 2017) Study of Early Education and Development: Experiences of Early Years Pupil Premium

<sup>245</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>246</sup> Ibid

<sup>247</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>248</sup> Social Mobility Commission (2016) State of the Nation 2016: Social Mobility in Great Britain, London

<sup>249</sup> Ibid

<sup>250</sup> Ibid

<sup>251</sup> Social Mobility Commission (2016) State of the Nation 2016: Social Mobility in Great Britain, London



“lead to lasting increases in cognitive ability...which leads to larger effects from subsequent investments in schooling”.<sup>252</sup>

5.1.15. If EYPP is claimed widely and used effectively, the case for the funding rates to be increased is strengthened. If the sector does not make good use of the funding, it could lose it.<sup>253</sup>

5.1.16. The Committee believes that there is a strong case for tackling the attainment gap from an early age. However, the current rate of funding is not sufficient to achieve this, and is not in line with other levels of Pupil Premium funding. Therefore, the Committee recommends:

#### **Recommendation 6**

**KCC’s Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education should write to the Secretary of State for Education to inform him that the Committee supports the recommendation of the Social Mobility Commission’s report that Early Years Pupil Premium funding should be doubled, funded by either a re-distribution of Primary Pupil Premium or from elsewhere within the DfE budget.**

#### **Recommendation 7**

**KCC’s Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should carry out a pilot to determine the extent to which increasing the Early Years Pupil Premium funding rate would have a positive impact on narrowing the attainment gap.**

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<sup>252</sup> Education Policy Institute (2016) *Divergent Pathways: The Disadvantage Gap, Accountability and the Pupil Premium*, London

<sup>253</sup> Early Education (2016) *Practical Tips on Allocating Early Years Pupil Premium Funding*, London

## 5.2. Children in Care

- 5.2.1. Children in local authority care can face many barriers to learning, from the journey that took them into care, to the disruption that changes in care can bring. They may have attended a number of schools or been absent from school for an extended period of time.<sup>254</sup>

***“Children’s early experiences have a significant impact on their development and future life chances. As a result of their experiences both before and during care, looked after children are at greater risk than their peers.”***

**Source:** NSPCC (2018) Children in Care, online at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/children-in-care/>

- 5.2.2. These barriers to learning are evident from the attainment gap.

**Figure 8: Comparison of percentage of children achieving A\*-C in GCSE English & maths**

	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Kent – all pupils	61.0%	59.8%	63.7%
Kent – CiC	12.1%	14.4%	20.0%
National - CiC	14.3%	15.9%	17.5%

**Source:** DfE (2017), Outcomes for Looked After Children - Table LA3a: Key stage 4 eligibility and performance of children who have been looked after continuously for at least twelve months, and KCC Management Information Unit (Feb 2017)

- 5.2.3. Local authorities receive £2,300 Pupil Premium Plus funding for each eligible child. Funding is ring-fenced and any unspent money must be returned to the DfE. In 2016-17, 1,396 Kent pupils received some form of PPP funding from Virtual School Kent.<sup>255</sup>

<sup>254</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent’s Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>255</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Plus Report 2016-17, Maidstone

5.2.4. The use of PPP is the responsibility of the Virtual School Headteacher, who must ensure the funding is used to “improve attainment, diminish the difference and accelerate progress as identified in [each] young person’s PEP.”<sup>256</sup>

### **Personal Education Plan (PEP)**

The PEP documents a course of action to help a child or young person reach their full academic and life potential. It is a legal requirement for every young person in care of statutory school age to have at least two PEP meetings each academic year. The document should contain SMART targets, and identify the resources needed to meet those targets.

Source: Kent County Council (2017), Personal Education Plans - Virtual School Kent, online:  
<http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/vsk-resources/personal-education-plan-epep>

5.2.5. Local authorities allocate PPP in various ways. Some give schools 100% of the funding, whilst others retain it all and invite schools to apply. Many adopt a middle-ground approach. VSK used the second approach in the first year, but found that many schools were reluctant to apply, particularly if they had to make applications to several local authorities. Following a consultation with head teachers it was agreed that £900 would be allocated to schools for each CiC, with any additional funding being provided according to the needs of the child following an application from the school.<sup>257</sup>

5.2.6. In Kent, allocation of the PPP is dependent on a child’s needs, as identified through their PEP. The grant is managed under the terms of the ‘Pupil Premium Plus Policy for Kent Children in Care April 2018 – March 2019’. £900 is allocated initially to each eligible child and paid to their school in three termly instalments of £300. Schools are then able to apply for additional funds if they are needed to narrow the gap. The reason behind this is that children’s needs vary over time; sometimes a significant amount of money will be necessary to meet their needs, whereas at other times a lower level of support will be sufficient.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Virtual School Kent, Pupil Premium Plus Policy for Kent Children in Care, April 2018- March 2019, Maidstone

<sup>257</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>258</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Virtual School Kent, Pupil Premium Plus Policy for Kent Children in Care, April 2018- March 2019, Maidstone

5.2.7. VSK reported that 81% of Kent's PPP had been allocated to schools, with the rest retained for county-wide interventions such as paired reading, which had been successful in raising the reading age of those involved by at least ten months. Some funding was also retained for educational support officers (that is, high-level teaching assistants who were paid for term time only).<sup>259</sup>

5.2.8. One Kent school commented that the application process for additional PPP funds felt like 'jumping through hoops' and that it implied that schools would not spend the money effectively. Also, some schools do not have the resources needed to complete the application process.<sup>260</sup> However, as demonstrated in Figure 8, the attainment gap between CiC and their peers in Kent is narrowing and is now better than the national average, so the allocation process appears to be having a positive impact.

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<sup>259</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>260</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 17 November 2017, Maidstone

## Out-of-County Children

- 5.2.9. There are currently 88 Kent children in care in placements outside the county, representing between 5% and 7% of the cohort. These placements are mostly in Medway; children are usually only placed further afield for specific reasons, such as access to very specialist resources.<sup>261 262</sup>
- 5.2.10. As the local authority of the child in care's origin, Kent remains the Corporate Parent. The out-of-county schools receive from KCC up to £900 per child per year paid in three instalments, and they are also able to apply for additional funds as any Kent school can.<sup>263</sup>
- 5.2.11. 984 out-of-county school-aged children in care are placed in Kent schools by 102 Authorities.<sup>264</sup> The size of Kent's challenge becomes apparent when this is compared to the number of Kent children in care receiving PPP (1,396 in 2016-17).
- 5.2.12. 55% of out-of-county CiC come from London boroughs.<sup>265</sup> The Committee was told that if all London boroughs worked together, they would have sufficient capacity between them to place all of these children in London schools. However, about half of them place children outside their area.<sup>266</sup>
- 5.2.13. Schools in Thanet, Herne Bay, Whitstable and Sheppey have a high concentration of CiC from other local authorities, in part due to the number of Independent Fostering Agencies in operation in those areas. Thanet schools in particular face significant pressure, as around 60%-80% of pupils are in receipt of PPP.<sup>267</sup> For example, the Oasis Academy in the Isle of Sheppey has over 40 CiC from 16 different authorities. Not only does this mean the school must liaise with numerous Virtual Schools, but that they must deal with a high concentration of complex cases.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, Written Evidence, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>262</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>263</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, Written Evidence, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>264</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Management Information Data 12 March 2018

<sup>265</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Management Information Data 12 March 2018

<sup>266</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>267</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>268</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, Written Evidence, 23 March 2018, Maidstone

- 5.2.14. VSK does not hold the PPP funding for out-of-county CiC placed in Kent schools, as their home authority retains Corporate Parent responsibility.<sup>269</sup> The Corporate Parent also holds responsibility for providing support to their CiC. In some instances, this works very well, with these authorities employing staff to support their out-of-county children. In other instances, there is no such provision, and key workers can prove difficult to get hold of.<sup>270</sup> As a result, host schools may not receive adequate information about these children, who in some cases may have complex needs.
- 5.2.15. The Kent Association of Headteachers (KAH) consider that, when children are placed in care from outside the county, the level of complexity around funding, and the appropriateness of placements, is a serious concern. KAH would like to see KCC take a firm line, with other local authorities, over the placing of these children into the county without sufficient resourcing and without careful consideration of the impact their placements have on local schools.<sup>271</sup>
- 5.2.16. The Committee believes that the number of CiC placements from other local authorities in Kent is a matter of concern. The concentration of these placements in certain areas of Kent compounds this situation. Also, inadequate placement information makes it very difficult for local schools to target interventions that meet the needs of individual children in care and narrow the attainment gap.

#### **Recommendation 8**

**KCC's Corporate Director for Children, Education and Young people should work with other local authorities that place children in care in Kent schools to ensure that consideration is given to the appropriateness of the placements, taking into account whether adequate support is in place for the Pupil Premium Plus to be spent effectively.**

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<sup>269</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 10 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>270</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, Written Evidence, 29 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>271</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, written evidence, 24 January 2018, Maidstone

## 5.3. Service Children

- 5.3.1. The Service Pupil Premium was introduced in April 2011 to provide schools with “the opportunities and means to offer the additional support [Service] children may need during times of deployment and mobility”.<sup>272</sup> It differs from the Pupil Premium Grant in that it does not focus on raising pupils’ attainment; instead, it provides mainly pastoral support in order to help “mitigate the negative impact on Service children of family mobility or parental deployment”.<sup>273</sup>
- 5.3.2. According to the January 2017 census data, Kent has the tenth largest number of Service children in England;<sup>274</sup> in 2016-17 there were 1,885 Service children in 293 schools, representing 0.8% of the total school population in the county.<sup>275</sup>
- 5.3.3. The Committee found that Service children may experience more stressful lives than their peers and may receive insufficient support from their schools.
- 5.3.4. There have been numerous studies of the particular needs of Service children, demonstrating the impact on their social and emotional well-being of the mobility and deployment of one or both of their parents, sometimes overseas. This impact depends on how long the child knows in advance about a move and how the situation is handled by the parents. Notice of a move ranges from 12–18 months to a minimum of just six weeks. Many Service children in Kent have attended between 6 and 9 schools; one child moved to 12 different schools.<sup>276 277</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Ministry of Defence (2012) Service Pupil Premium – Examples of Best Practice

<sup>273</sup> Ministry of Defence (9 Jan 2018) The Service Pupil Premium: what you need to know, online, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-service-pupil-premium/service-pupil-premium-what-you-need-to-know>

<sup>274</sup> Gov.uk (2 Dec 2017) Pupil Premium 2017 to 2018: allocations (local authority and parliamentary constituency level), online, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2017-to-2018>

<sup>275</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, written evidence, 4 October 2017, Maidstone

<sup>276</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 13 November 2017, Maidstone,

<sup>277</sup> Ofsted (2011) Children in Service Families; The Quality and Impact of Partnership Provision for Children in Service Families, Manchester

- 5.3.5. Only 49 Kent schools have more than 10 Service children.<sup>278</sup> Evidence suggests that it is difficult for schools with only a handful of Service children to support them as effectively as those with a higher number.<sup>279</sup> This is mainly due to inadequate financial support, a lack of expertise amongst teachers, and insufficient peer support. The Civilian-Military Partnership Board organises outreach events so that Service children from different schools can meet and share their experiences; unfortunately, Service children from schools with low numbers of this cohort – and who would most benefit from the events - often do not attend.<sup>280</sup>
- 5.3.6. Schools can be flexible in how they use Service Pupil Premium to best meet the specific needs of their Service children. For example, they can employ Mobility Co-ordinators, Forces Liaison Officers and Parent Support Advisors. They can offer counselling, nurture groups or help a child communicate with their parents when they are deployed abroad. One local school with a large intake of Service children uses some of the funding to employ Nepalese speaking support staff and educational psychologist sessions. The school has also used the funding to buy books and toys for children whose possessions have been ruined in transit.<sup>281</sup>
- 5.3.7. Nonetheless, the evidence suggests that the support these children need can exceed the funding available through the Service Pupil Premium (£300 per child). In addition, the Committee was told that several Kent schools do not publish details on their websites of how they spend Service Pupil Premium funding as they are expected to do.<sup>282</sup>
- 5.3.8. Best practice examples show that the appointment of Service personnel as school governors can be particularly effective in ensuring that Service children’s needs are met and championed.<sup>283</sup>
- 5.3.9. The Committee welcomes the opportunity, through this report, to raise awareness of the specific needs of Service children. It commends

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid

<sup>279</sup> Ofsted (2011) Children in Service Families. Kent County Council (2017), Pupil Premium Select Committee, 13 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>280</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 13 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>281</sup> Ibid

<sup>282</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 13 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>283</sup> Ibid



the efforts of many Kent schools to meet the needs of these children with somewhat limited Service Pupil Premium funding.

5.3.10. The Committee believes that clear accountability channels and close monitoring are necessary to make sure that the Service Pupil Premium funding is spent as effectively as possible to meet the needs of Service children, and that they should be used consistently across the county.

5.3.11. **As reflected in Recommendation 2, the Committee urges every Kent school with Service children to appoint a school governor – ideally someone with a Services background - to champion the needs of Service children and to be responsible for monitoring the spending of Service Pupil Premium funding.**

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## 6. Sharing Best Practice

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Schools can mitigate the grave disadvantage faced by some young people. Yet, the attainment of vulnerable pupils varies greatly between schools with similar intakes.

One of the most powerful ways of maximising the impact of the Pupil Premium is through the dissemination of those strategies and interventions that have been shown to be most effective in closing the attainment gap between underprivileged students and their peers.

Although there is extensive collaboration and good practice sharing amongst local schools and through the work of KCC, more could be done to help the rest to reach the standards of the best.

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## 6.1. Toolkits

- 6.1.1. Since its introduction in 2011, the Pupil Premium has added an additional resource that is intended to focus on the achievement of disadvantaged students. The funding gives schools an opportunity to find innovative ways of meeting the needs of individual learners.
- 6.1.2. To do this, schools need accurate and timely data, the monitoring of pupils' progress, and the implementation of evidence-based approaches that meet the needs of all learners.
- 6.1.3. As indicated by the Teaching Schools Council, “the schools that are most successful at raising the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils differ in many ways but share certain important characteristics – their approaches to using Pupil Premium are strategic, evidence-based, ambitious and built on an ethos of high quality teaching for all.”<sup>284</sup>

***“...the schools that are most successful at raising the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils differ in many ways but share certain important characteristics – their approaches to using Pupil Premium are strategic, evidence-based, ambitious and built on an ethos of high quality teaching for all.”***

- 6.1.4. Yet, as indicated by the Sutton Trust and the EEF, there are still many school leaders who do not consider research evidence before making spending decisions on the Pupil Premium; in 2015 only two out of three school leaders (64%) made use of this evidence. Relatively few schools use some of the best low-cost but proven approaches, such as peer-to-peer tutoring (1%). As the two organisations point out, ‘it’s not what you spend, it’s the way that you spend it... that’s what gets results’.<sup>285</sup>
- 6.1.5. As mentioned earlier, sharing good practice is crucial to promoting the most efficient and effective use of Pupil Premium funding.

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<sup>284</sup> Teaching Schools Council and National College for Teaching and Leadership (2016) Effective Pupil Premium Reviews: A Guide Developed by the Teaching Schools Council, London

<sup>285</sup> The Sutton Trust/Education Endowment Foundation (2015) The Pupil Premium: Next Steps, London

- 6.1.6. The Sutton Trust and EEF have produced a Teaching and Learning Toolkit. This is an accessible summary of educational research which gives schools on how to use their resources to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. The Toolkit can be accessed free of charge. It covers over 30 topics, with interventions ranked in terms of their impact, along with their cost per pupil and the strength of the evidence.<sup>286 287</sup>
- 6.1.7. A recent survey by the Sutton Trust showed that, although the Toolkit's take-up has increased in recent years, only 60% of schools were using the Toolkit.<sup>288</sup>
- 6.1.8. KCC is also working to help local schools make the best use of Pupil Premium funding. The School Improvement Strategy encourages schools to make the best use of Pupil Premium funding by consistent use of the Sutton Trust's materials, including the most effective and low-cost strategies in their Teaching and Learning Toolkit. However, although local schools use them more widely and consistently than in the past, it seems that more could be done to disseminate those materials.<sup>289</sup>
- 6.1.9. KCC has developed guidance literature for schools, such as the Diminishing the Difference Toolkit, and Effective Strategies for Improving Progress and Attainment for Disadvantaged Pupils, which have been bought by a number of schools.<sup>290</sup>
- 6.1.10. KCC also promotes the use of formal Pupil Premium reviews, which are recommended by the DfE for schools that need to make more effective use of the funding to narrow the gap.<sup>291</sup>
- 6.1.11. Recent training has included workshops on using the toolkits, and professional development for teachers on how best to meet the needs of vulnerable learners, including those with SEN and those supported by the Pupil Premium.<sup>292</sup>
- 6.1.12. Finally, KCC has developed its own Pupil Premium Toolkit. It costs £240 and is available in two versions - one for primary and one for secondary schools.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> The Sutton Trust (2018) Teaching and Learning Toolkit, online, <https://www.suttontrust.com/about-us/education-endowment-foundation/teaching-learning-toolkit/>

<sup>287</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 13 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>288</sup> The Sutton Trust (2017) NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey

<sup>289</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>290</sup> Ibid

<sup>291</sup> Ibid

<sup>292</sup> Ibid

<sup>293</sup> EduKent (2018) Online Resources Information: Developing a Successful Pupil Premium Strategy - A Practical Toolkit for Schools, online, [http://www.edukent.co.uk/our\\_services/service/developing\\_a\\_successful\\_pupil\\_premium\\_strategy\\_a\\_practical\\_toolkit\\_for\\_scho/](http://www.edukent.co.uk/our_services/service/developing_a_successful_pupil_premium_strategy_a_practical_toolkit_for_scho/)

6.1.13. The toolkits are very comprehensive, and contain high quality material which helps schools to:

- show their commitment to closing the attainment gaps by targeting interventions and developing robust systems
- develop reliable and efficient systems for tracking and analysing a range of pupil information, including attendance, attainment and progress
- engage in effective and accurate evidence-based self-evaluation
- ensure that their websites are compliant with the statutory guidance on providing information about Pupil Premium
- develop an effective approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of Pupil Premium spending
- audit the systems and procedures for supporting disadvantaged pupils at key points of the school year
- gather accurate and evaluative documentation to report to school governors.<sup>294</sup>

6.1.14. The Committee believes that these toolkits are an excellent way of promoting a more effective use of Pupil Premium funding by schools. However, the take-up of these toolkits by local schools is too low; during the last academic year only 132 schools out of 552 used either version of the Kent Pupil Premium Toolkit.<sup>295</sup>

6.1.15. After viewing the successful toolkit developed by Essex County Council, which is more concise and free of charge, the Committee suggests that more condensed and teacher-friendly versions of the Kent toolkits could be added to the existing ones.<sup>296</sup> The Committee further recommends that, for the current cost of £240, the more concise version of either the Primary or Secondary Toolkit should be part of a package that includes the full version of that Toolkit as well as training for school leaders on how best to use it.

#### **Recommendation 9**

**KCC's Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should produce more concise versions of both the Kent Primary and Secondary Pupil Premium Toolkits. For the current cost of £240, each of these versions should be sold as part of a package that includes the full version as well as training for school leaders on how best to use them.**

<sup>294</sup> KCC (14 March 2017) Developing a Successful Pupil Premium Strategy - a Practical Toolkit for Schools (<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/news-and-events/news/primary/developing-a-successful-pupil-premium-strategy-a-practical-toolkit-for-schools>)

<sup>295</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>296</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 20 November 2017, Maidstone

## 6.2. Sharing Best Practice

- 6.2.1. As stated earlier, the relationship between poverty, home background and life chances is more pronounced in the UK than in most other European countries. Schools can play a central role in reducing the gap in performance between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers and, thereby, in increasing social mobility.<sup>297</sup>
- 6.2.2. For a variety of complex reasons, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils varies greatly between similar schools; in too many instances what is working very well in some schools is not being replicated in schools with a similar proportion of disadvantaged pupils.<sup>298 299</sup>
- 6.2.3. As Ofsted's Her Majesty's Chief Inspector put it, "exceptional schools can make up for grave disadvantages faced by young people... Economic disadvantage in itself is not an insurmountable barrier to educational success...Some schools with high proportions of pupils eligible for FSM do very well for this group, while others in the same geographical location do not."<sup>300</sup>

***"...exceptional schools can make up for grave disadvantages faced by young people...Economic disadvantage in itself is not an insurmountable barrier to educational success...Some schools with high proportions of pupils eligible for FSM do very well for this group, while others in the same geographical location do not."***

- 6.2.4. Evidence gathered by the Committee from local schools confirms this view; in some of the most deprived areas of Kent there are

<sup>297</sup> Macleod, S. et al. (2015) Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Articulating Success and Good Practice. Department for Education, London

<sup>298</sup> Ofsted (2013) Unseen Children: Access and Achievement 20 Years On, Manchester

<sup>299</sup> Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) Cracking the Code: How Schools Can Improve Social Mobility, London

<sup>300</sup> Ofsted (2013) Unseen Children: Access and Achievement 20 Years On, Manchester



outstanding schools that have managed to close the attainment gap.<sup>301</sup>  
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6.2.5. The DfE maintains that "one of the most powerful ways of achieving improvement is through collaboration, with the best schools, settings and leaders supporting those that are more challenged."<sup>303</sup>

6.2.6. In 2015 the Public Accounts Committee recommended that it was necessary to develop mechanisms to make sure schools use effective interventions with disadvantaged pupils and share best practice.<sup>304</sup> In its response later that year, the Government agreed and highlighted the role of the EEF and the Pupil Premium Awards.<sup>305</sup>

6.2.7. While there is no one single intervention that can lead to success, the most effective schools are those that are open to outside influences, welcome challenges and develop bespoke measures tailored to their circumstances.<sup>306</sup>

6.2.8. As mentioned earlier, a recent report commissioned by the DfE identified good practice in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils through seven "Building Blocks for Success" (please see Figure 7 in section 4.1). These are:

- Promoting an ethos of attainment for **all** pupils, rather than stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as a group with less potential to succeed.
- Having 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.
- Focusing on high quality teaching first rather than on bolt-on strategies and activities outside school hours.
- Focusing on outcomes and progress for individual pupils rather than on providing general strategies.
- Deploying the best staff to support disadvantaged pupils; developing the skills and roles of teachers and TAs rather than using additional staff who do not know the pupils well.
- Making decisions based on data and responding to evidence, using frequent, rather than one-off assessments and decision points.

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<sup>301</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, 15 January 2018, Maidstone

<sup>302</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Pupil Premium Select Committee, visit, 9 November 2017, Maidstone

<sup>303</sup> Ofsted (2013) Unseen Children: Access and Achievement 20 Years On, Manchester

<sup>304</sup> Public Accounts Committee (9 Oct 2015) Funding for Disadvantaged Pupils, HC 327

<sup>305</sup> HM Treasury (Dec 2015) Treasury Minutes: Government responses on the First to the Third reports from the Committee of Public Accounts: Session 2015-16, and progress on Government Cash Management, Cm9170, pp8-13

<sup>306</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

- Having clear, responsive leadership: setting ever higher aspirations and devolving responsibility for raising attainment to all staff, rather than accepting low aspirations and variable performance.<sup>307</sup>

6.2.9. Evidence shows extensive good practice and collaboration between local schools and through the work of KCC.

6.2.10. As already mentioned, a research project carried out by KCC's School Improvement team highlighted 5 principle areas that have impacted most significantly on narrowing the gap (the results were summarised in a research paper that is available on Kelsi):

- Setting the Vision
- Investment in Early Years
- Relentless focus on Quality First Teaching
- Designing a curriculum that meets the needs of the learners
- Communication and Literacy<sup>308</sup>

6.2.11. There is growing recognition amongst local education settings that the best way to raise the academic standards of disadvantaged pupils is by promoting and cascading good practice. 522 Kent schools are already in some form of collaboration or partnership. Over 450 of Kent's 700 Early Years and Childcare providers in the private, voluntary and independent sectors are now working as part of over 50 formal collaborations in an effort to achieve a faster rate of improvement and narrow gaps in attainment.<sup>309</sup>

6.2.12. KCC recently produced a revised Strategy for Vulnerable Learners that aims to identify new approaches and activities to ensure that every child and young person in Kent achieves their full potential. It is anticipated that the findings and best practice identified in this Select Committee's report will inform and add weight to that strategy.<sup>310</sup>

6.2.13. KCC distributes substantial funding to support vulnerable learners in the county; in 2016-17 £222.2 million was allocated to schools and colleges, and a further £39.8 million was used to deliver early interventions and specialist support services. Kent's Pupil Premium funding alone now exceeds £58 million (Figure 9 below).<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Macleod, S. et al. (2015) Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Articulating Success and Good Practice. Department for Education, London

<sup>308</sup> Mitchell, T. (2017) Learning From Success. A Research Paper: How Strategic Leadership Effectively Diminishes Differences for Disadvantaged Pupils in Successful Kent Schools

<sup>309</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>310</sup> Ibid

<sup>311</sup> Ibid

**Figure 9: KCC funding for vulnerable learners for 2016-17**

	<b>Funding Allocations to Schools (£ m)</b>	<b>Local Authority Support Services (£m)</b>
<b>High Needs Funding</b>		
Special Schools	70.5	
Resourced SEN Provision (Units)	15.1	
Support for high needs pupils in Mainstream schools	23.8	
Support for high needs pupils in FE Colleges	8.7	
Support for high needs pupils in Independent Specialist Provision (post 16)	4.6	
Support for high needs pupils in Independent and Non-Maintained schools	24.4	
Support for high needs pupils in Maintained schools in OLAs	3.1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>150.2</b>	
Pupil Referral Units / Alternative Provision	12.2	2.6
<b>Pupil Premium</b>		
Free School Meals	52.1	
Looked After Children (supported by VSK)	2.8	
Post LAC (Adoption)	1.7	
Service Children	0.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>72.0</b>	
STLS and LIFT		5.5
Early Help and Preventative Services		34.3
<b>Total Spent by the LA on Vulnerable Learners</b>		<b>262.0</b>

**Source:** Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

6.2.14. A key aim of the strategy is to ensure that services to support vulnerable children and young people are joined up and coherent, for example through better coordination of services and activities at district

level. This includes better school engagement with services such as Early Help, PRUs and the Health Needs Education Service.<sup>312</sup>

6.2.15. The strategy includes interventions that KCC's Children, Young People and Education Directorate has been undertaking with schools in 2016-17 to improve the effectiveness of their use of Pupil Premium funding. This work includes the following:

- effective speech and language support
- strong and integrated outdoor learning provision, such as forest schools, science gardens and beach schools
- specialist provision for the arts, music and PE
- developing self-esteem, resilience and aspirations
- investing heavily in reading.<sup>313</sup>

6.2.16. Specific interventions include the promotion of enrichment activities and of Pupil Premium Reviews, and the development of KCC's own Pupil Premium Toolkit.

6.2.17. There is a recognition that Pupil Premium funding should be used not only to raise academic attainment, but also to support enrichment activities - such as sports, the performing arts, music lessons, after school clubs and trips. These opportunities - which, without Pupil Premium funding, would not be possible - help disadvantaged children to develop their cultural capital as well as their confidence, resilience and self-belief.<sup>314</sup>

6.2.18. A valuable way of improving academic outcomes through the use of Pupil Premium funding is to have a formal review of a school's strategy. Where gaps are not closing, and where there may be a need to develop more effective strategies and interventions, KCC is encouraging local schools to undertake Pupil Premium Reviews. In order to promote these reviews, KCC also support schools that are successfully using the Pupil Premium to share their best practice.<sup>315</sup>

6.2.19. Kent's Pupil Premium Toolkit uses a whole school approach to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and offers examples of the best use of the resources. The Toolkit is supported by training opportunities for school staff.<sup>316</sup>

6.2.20. Kent also employs 12 Senior Improvement Advisers, whose role is to champion vulnerable learners, monitor schools' statutory duty to use

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid

<sup>313</sup> Ibid

<sup>314</sup> Ibid

<sup>315</sup> Ibid

<sup>316</sup> Ibid

Pupil Premium funding effectively, and challenge school leaders on the evidence of the impact of the funding.<sup>317</sup>

6.2.21. In addition to Pupil Premium Reviews and the Toolkit, the development of the Kelsi website - to host best practice case studies and strategies from our most successful schools – and partnership work with the Kent Association of Headteachers - to develop a self-improving school system in the county – are key ways of disseminating good practice and promoting effective pupil Premium strategies and interventions.<sup>318</sup>

6.2.22. Kelsi is an online resource, provided by KCC, for education professionals in Kent. The website includes a number of case studies, ideas from Kent schools on how best to spend Pupil Premium funding, and self-evaluation kits.<sup>319</sup>

6.2.23. The Committee accepts that this website is an excellent way of sharing information but believes that it could be further developed to promote effective use of Pupil Premium and to cascade best practice. For instance, part of the School Improvement Strategy has been to encourage Kent schools to make the best use of the funding by consistent use of the Sutton Trust's evidence papers, including the most effective and low-cost strategies in their Teaching and Learning Toolkit. Although these are used by schools more widely and consistently than in the past, there is still more to do to disseminate these approaches and interventions.<sup>320</sup>

6.2.24. Over the last few years KCC has allocated over £10m from the Schools Funding Forum to the KAH to promote school collaborations and school-to-school support. This is believed to be one of the most effective ways of supporting teacher development, spreading best practice, raising standards and narrowing the attainment gap.<sup>321</sup>

6.2.25. In the past few years 522 Kent schools have been involved in collaborative projects for school improvement and 329 have benefited from successful bids for funding to the KAH Area Boards. These bids were focused on raising standards, narrowing attainment gaps, improving teaching, building leadership capacity and helping schools to improve Ofsted inspection outcomes. Overall, there has been a positive result, reflected in more good and outstanding schools, improved standards of attainment at each key stage, and better outcomes for pupils supported by the Pupil Premium.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid

<sup>318</sup> Ibid

<sup>319</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium – Sharing Best Practice, online, <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/policies-and-guidance/pupil-premium/sharing-best-practice>

<sup>320</sup> Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

<sup>321</sup> Ibid

<sup>322</sup> Ibid

- 6.2.26. The KAH advised the Select Committee that detailed information about the most effective use of PP funding could be gathered from the KAH Area Boards and the School Improvement Advisors. The Area Boards are the intelligence-gathering groups where headteachers, Senior Improvement Advisors and teacher representatives meet regularly to share knowledge about the schools in their areas. This includes a particular focus on good practice which has been identified by the Senior Improvement Advisors or headteachers, and which can be disseminated to other schools.<sup>323</sup>
- 6.2.27. The Select Committee believes that the sharing of best practice is vital to the effective use of Pupil Premium funding and to narrowing the attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their peers. The Committee therefore recommends that the sharing of best practice interventions in Kent continues to be encouraged and shared through the KELSI website and through collaboration with the Kent Association of Headteachers.

#### **Recommendation 10**

**KCC's Directorate for Children, Young People and Education should ensure that Pupil Premium best practice at many Kent schools continues to be encouraged and shared across all Kent schools and Early Years providers. This best practice should be further promoted through the Kelsi website and through collaboration with the Kent Association of Headteachers.**

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<sup>323</sup> Kent County Council (2018) Pupil Premium Select Committee, written evidence, 24 January 2018, Maidstone,

**Good practice Pupil Premium strategies and interventions identified by the Select Committee include the following.**

### **Pupil Premium Strategies and Interventions Identified by the Select Committee**

- Promote collaboration and the sharing of good practice strategies and interventions.
- Encourage the use of evidence-based interventions.
- Secure more investment in Early Years.
- Appoint school governors who champion all children in receipt of any type of Pupil Premium and who monitor the allocation of the funding.
- Where Pupil Premium is used for whole class support, support needs should be designed primarily with disadvantaged children in mind.
- Focus on Communication and Literacy.
- Promote an ethos in which the support of vulnerable pupils is everybody's responsibility.
- Provide rich and diverse experiences for disadvantaged pupils.
- Organise activities that develop pupils' emotional resilience.
- Develop aspirational cultures and encourage parental engagement and involvement.

- Recognise that disadvantaged pupils are not a homogenous group; the most able pupils need to be challenged if they are to realise their full potential.
- If some interventions and strategies are found not to work, schools should be prepared to develop and test other ones.

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## 7. Conclusion

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Relatively low social mobility in England means that, for too many children, poverty and social background will limit their life chances.

Schools can play a central role in supporting equality of opportunity and in promoting better outcomes for disadvantaged students. The Pupil Premium was introduced in 2011 to help maintained schools to achieve this aim.

However, despite general success in improving academic results and raising standards, the attainment gap between vulnerable children and their peers remains too wide and progress in closing it too slow.

Yet many schools are bucking the trend and are helping their disadvantaged students to achieve educational success. The roles of passionate school leaders and good teachers, and the effective engagement of parents in their children's education, are all key factors.

In order to maximise the impact of the Pupil Premium and to close the attainment gap, the sharing of good practice strategies and interventions between these schools and less successful ones is crucial.

During the review it has also become apparent that the gap grows wider as pupils move through the education system; if the Government puts reducing inequality in the early years at the heart of its social mobility agenda, and ensures that all children are school-ready by the age of five, the results could be transformational.

A more effective use of the Pupil Premium through better sharing of good practice, and greater focus on early years, could make a real difference to the lives of children in Kent.



# Appendix 1

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## Evidence

### Oral Evidence

The list includes a summary of the key topics discussed in each session.

#### Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017

- **Linda Pickles, Principal Adviser for Primary School Improvement, and Celia Buxton, Principal Adviser for Secondary, PRUs and Special Schools, Kent County Council**
  - Overview of Pupil Premium: its purpose, who is eligible, who is responsible
  - The attainment gap in Kent
  - The Kent toolkit and examples of interventions used
  - Challenges, including teacher recruitment and retention
- **Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Education, and Shellina Prendergast, Deputy Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Education, Kent County Council**
  - FSM as eligibility criteria
  - Early Years Pupil Premium
  - Key messages from research
  - The Kent toolkit

#### Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017

- **Tony Doran, Headteacher, Virtual School Kent**
  - The responsibilities of KCC in relation to Children in Care
  - Children in Care from other Local Authorities
  - Other areas of need: Early Years, SEN and Post-16
- **Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director Children, Young People & Education, Kent County Council**
  - KCC and school responsibilities for Pupil Premium
  - FSM as eligibility criteria
  - Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners

- **Steve Ackerley, Senior Improvement Advisor, Children, Young People & Education, Kent County Council**
  - Pupil Premium spending in Special Schools
  - Children with SEN
  - Evidence-based interventions

### **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

- **Tim Woolmer and Debra Exall, Kent County Council, with Angela Maxted, Headteacher, Cheriton Primary School, Folkestone, and Deby Day, Headteacher, Guston C of E Primary School, Dover**
  - Overview of the Service Pupil Premium
  - Issues that face Service children
  - Barriers in schools with few Service children
  - Views on what KCC can do
- **James Turner, Deputy CEO, Education Endowment Foundation**
  - Roles and responsibilities of the Education Endowment Foundation
  - The EEF toolkit
  - Transition from primary to secondary school
  - Early Years
  - Opportunities and challenges and what KCC can do

### **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

- **Simon O'Keefe, Principal, Stour Academy Trust**
  - Overview of the Stour Academy Trust and its Pupil Premium allocation and strategy
  - Early Years
  - Recruitment
  - Opportunities and challenges and what KCC can do
- **Richard Hawkins, Headteacher, Green Park Community Primary School**
  - Overview of Pupil Premium in Green Park, and the school's strategy for spending it
  - Best practice interventions
  - How they encourage parents to apply for FSM
- **Sue Nicholson, Executive Headteacher, The Brent Primary School**
  - Overview of Pupil Premium in The Brent School, and the school's strategy for spending it
  - Best practice interventions

## Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017

- **Stephen Mellors, School Effectiveness Partner, and Carole Farrer, School Effectiveness Partner, Essex County Council**
  - Roles and responsibilities of Essex CC in relation to Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Plus
  - Essex toolkit
  - Best practice and how to promote it
- **Carl Roberts, Headmaster of The Malling School**
  - Overview of Pupil Premium in The Malling School, and the school's strategy for spending it
  - FSM as eligibility criteria
  - Best practice interventions
- **Rosemary Hafeez, Associate Director for School Standards and Performance, Achieving for Children, Richmond upon Thames Borough Council**
  - Roles and responsibilities of SPARK
  - Overview of the attainment gap in Kingston and Richmond
  - Interventions and strategies
  - Virtual School

## Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017

- **Ashley Crittenden, Headteacher, West Borough Primary School**
  - Overview of West Borough including the on-site nursery, and how Pupil Premium/ Early Years Pupil Premium is spent
  - Strategies used
  - Increasing take-up of FSM
- **Viki Butler and James Brooke, Vice Principals, The Canterbury Academy, Canterbury**
  - Overview of Pupil Premium in The Canterbury Academy
  - Best practice interventions and strategies
- **Sue Beauchamp, Head Teacher, Two Bridges PRU, serving Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and South Sevenoaks**
  - Roles and responsibilities of the PRU, along with its strategy for spending the Pupil Premium
  - Best practice interventions

## Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017

- **Linda Pickles, Principal Adviser for Primary School Improvement, Kent County Council**
  - Session to discuss and clarify any issues

## Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018

- **Steve Ward, Deputy Head Teacher, Oasis Academy Isle of Sheppey**
  - Overview of the Academy's Pupil Premium funding, how it is spent and variations between the two school sites
  - Challenges (including aspirations, increasing eligibility, parental engagement, teacher recruitment and retention)
- **Paul Luxmoore, CEO, Coastal Academies Trust**
  - Overview of Trust's Pupil Premium funding
  - Views on problems with Pupil Premium
  - Challenges

## Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018

- **Matt Dunkley, new Corporate Director for Children, Young People & Education, Kent County Council**
  - Revised Strategy for Vulnerable Learners
  - Attendance
  - FSM as eligibility criteria
  - What KCC has done and what more can it do
- **Deborah Stanley, Headteacher, Maidstone Grammar School for Girls**
  - Overview of school's Pupil Premium Strategy and how it is spent
  - Transition from primary to secondary school
  - What more KCC can do

## Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018

- **Alex Gamby, Head of Early Years and Childcare, and Sue Smith, Early Years and Childcare Equalities and Inclusion Manager, Kent County Council**
  - Role of Early Years and Childcare team
  - Early Years Pupil Premium



- **Julie Miles, Manager, Discovery Day Nursery, Maidstone, and Christine Robinson, Early Years and Childcare Equality and Inclusion Adviser, KCC**
  - Overview of Discovery Day Nursery
  - Early Years Pupil Premium
  
- **Chris Millins, Manager, Manor Road Pre-School, Tunbridge Wells, and Barbara Hall, Early Years and Childcare Equality and Inclusion Adviser, KCC**
  - Overview of Manor Road Pre-School
  - Early Years Pupil Premium

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018**

- **Celia Buxton, Principal Adviser for Secondary, PRUs and Special schools, Kent County Council**
  - Final session to discuss and clarify any issues

## Written Evidence

- **Anonymous, parent of adopted child in receipt of Pupil Premium**
- **Tony Doran, Virtual School Headteacher, KCC**
- **Caroline Hallett, Director of Strategy and Development, Imago Community - young carers and Pupil Premium**
- **Emma Hickling, Executive Headteacher, Kingswood, Ulcombe C of E, Leeds and Broomfield C of E Primary Schools Federation (KULB) – GRT pupils**
- **Sally Lees, Chair of Kent Association of Headteachers**
- **Carl Roberts, Headteacher, The Malling School – selective system**

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## Visits

### Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017

- Fulston Manor Academy
- The Oaks Infant School
- Queenborough Primary School

### Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017

- Infozone Youth Hub

### Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018

- St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary

### Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018

- Sacred Heart Secondary School and Sixth Form, Camberwell

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## Appendix 2

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### Glossary of Abbreviations

**CiC:** Children in Care

**CYPE:** Children, Young People and Education Directorate (KCC)

**DfE:** Department for Education

**EEF:** Education Endowment Foundation

**EPI:** Education Policy Institute

**ESFA:** Education and Skills Funding Agency

**EYFS:** Early Years Foundation Stage

**EYPP:** Early Years Pupil Premium

**FSM:** Free School Meals

**GRT:** Gypsy, Roma and Traveller

**KAH:** Kent Association of Headteachers

**KCC:** Kent County Council

**LA:** Local Authority

**NAO:** National Audit Office

**NFER:** National Foundation for Education Research

**OFSTED:** Office for Standards in Education

**PEP:** Personal Education Plan

**PPP:** Pupil Premium Plus

**PRU:** Pupil Referral Unit

**SEND:** Special Educational Needs and Disability

**SMART:** Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely

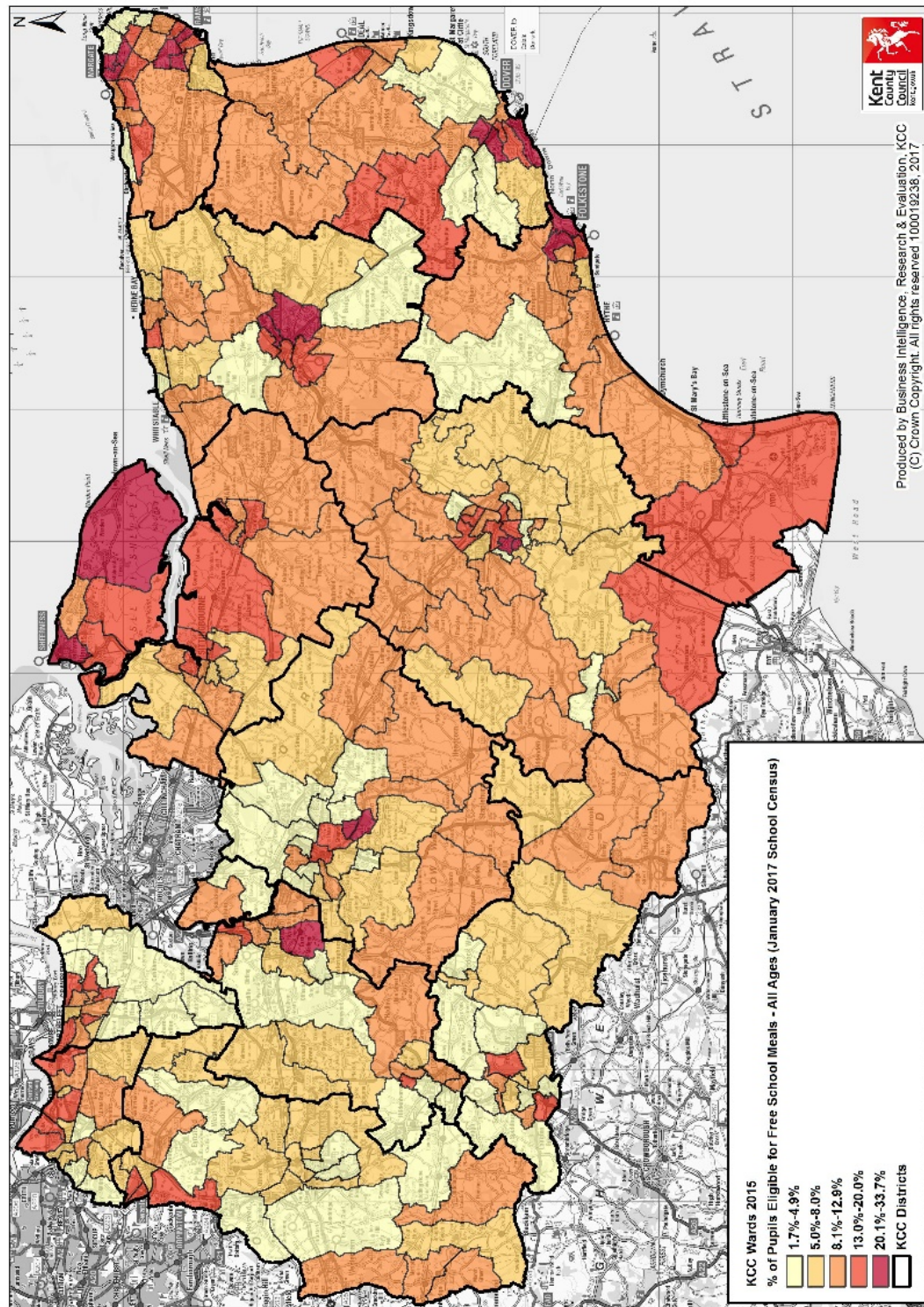
**VSK:** Virtual School Kent

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# Appendix 3

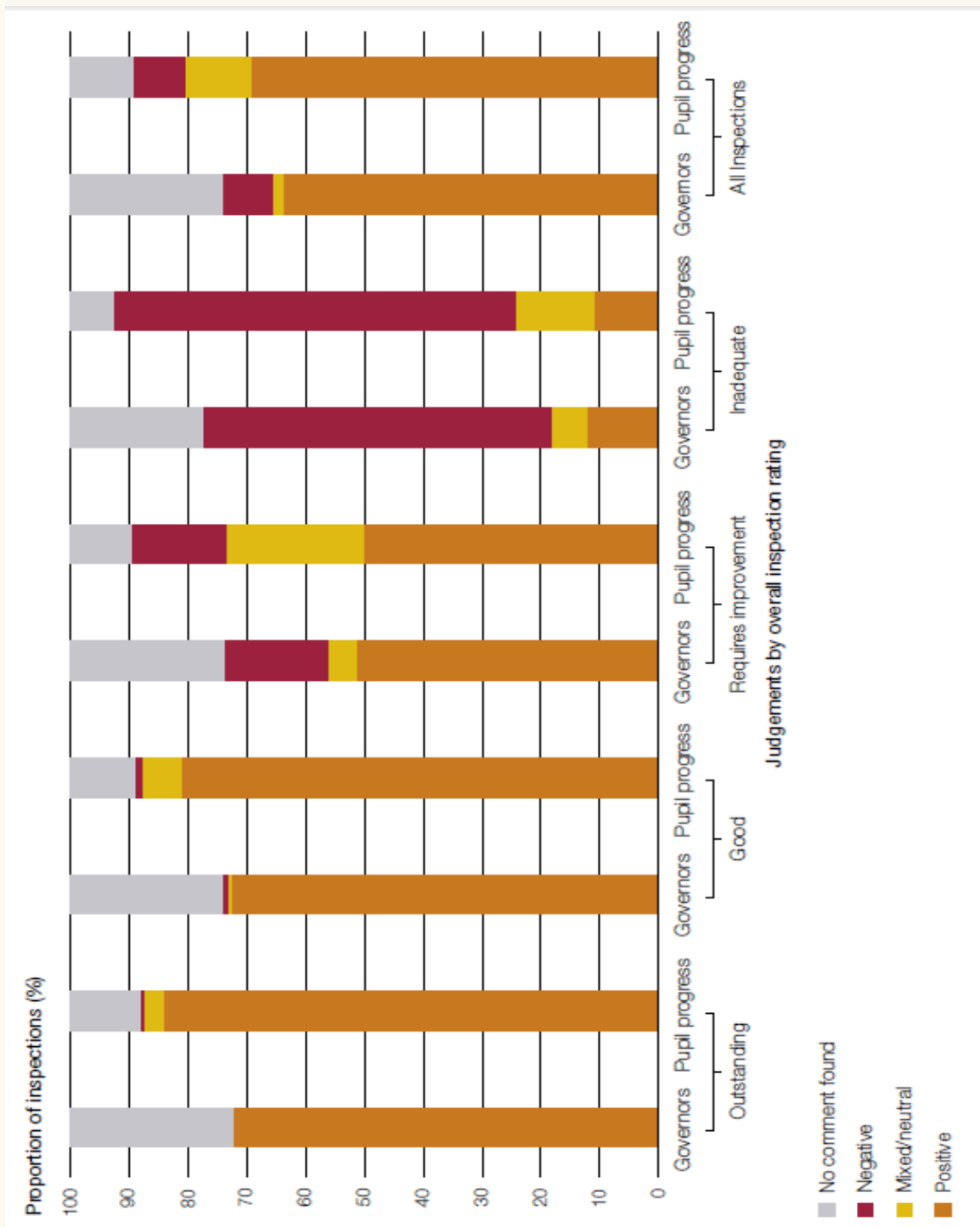
## Tables and Charts

Percentage of pupils eligible for Free School Meals across the Kent wards (2017 Census)



Source: Kent County Council (2017) Kent's Strategy for Vulnerable Learners, Maidstone

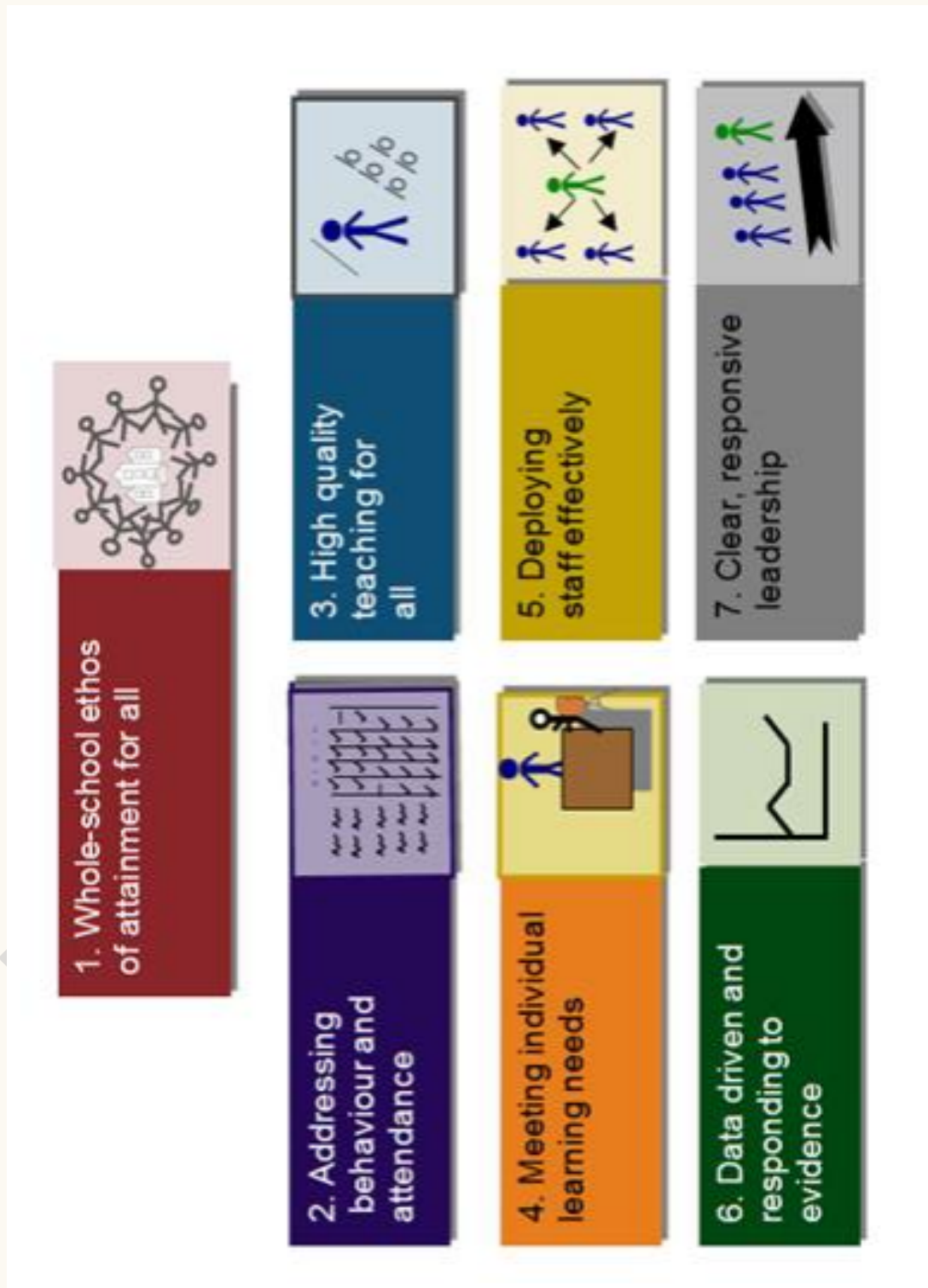
## School Governors' Oversight of Pupil Premium Funding and Disadvantaged Pupils' Progress, 2015



Source: National Audit Office's analysis of Ofsted reports, 2015



## Building Blocks for Success



**Source:** Macleod, S. et al. (2015) Supporting the Attainment of Disadvantaged Pupils: Articulating Success and Good Practice. Department for Education, London

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**The Pupil Premium Select Committee**

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