

## The Pupil Premium Select Committee Report

### 1. Executive Summary

#### 1.1. Committee Membership

1.1.1. The Committee consisted 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.

1.1.2. The Chairman of the Select Committee was Mrs Lesley Game. Other members of the Committee were Mrs Clair Bell, Mr Andy Booth, Mrs Penny Cole, Mrs Trudy Dean, Ms Sarah Hamilton, Mr James Mcinroy, Dr Lauren Sullivan and Mr Mike Whiting. 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.

### 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 schoolleaders 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.