

Attainment Sub-Committee

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Title:

Pupil Premium in Secondary Schools

Background

For nearly twenty years John Dunford, the retired leader of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) urged governments to provide schools with extra money to educate disadvantaged pupils. Pupil Premium was introduced by the government in April 2011.

John Dunford has recently taken up the role as Pupil Premium Champion (July 2013). His task is to talk to schools about the most effective ways of using the extra money and feedback issues raised by school leaders to ministers and civil servants.

From September 2013 schools will be held to account by Ofsted for the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the progress they make with particular emphasis on closing the achievement gap with other pupils.

Schools judged by Ofsted as 'requiring improvement' where the concerns are raised about the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils will take part in a Pupil Premium review. These schools will be supported by an experienced headteacher from another school, with the aim of developing a strategy for using pupil premium more effectively.

Since the Pupil Premium was introduced the amount received by schools has grown. Schools currently receive £900 for a child who is in receipt of free school meals or who is looked after. In 2014-15 the Pupil Premium in primary schools will rise to £1,300 per eligible FSM. The Pupil Premium in secondary schools will rise to £935 per pupil. Children who are looked after or have been adopted or are the subject of a special guardianship or residence order will receive a Pupil Premium Plus of £1,900 per annum.

The additional money is linked with proposals to set higher floor standards for primary school pupils. It is proposed that the current floor target of a minimum of 60% of pupils attaining level 4 or above in reading, writing **and** mathematics be increased to 85%.

In 2012, 68% of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium nationally achieved level 4 or higher at the end of Key Stage 2. For non free school meal pupils attainment was 84% demonstrating an achievement gap of 16 percentage points. For Wirral the percentage points gap was 14.4.

In 2013 the measure has changed from level 4 + in English and mathematics to level 4+ in reading, writing and mathematics, so it is more difficult to make direct comparisons regarding closing the gap. In Mathematics the gap for free school meal pupils has narrowed (14.5 – 14.2).

The gap widens at the end of Key Stage 4. Only 38.5% of free school meal pupils nationally achieved 5 A* - C, compared to 65.7% of non free school meal pupils – a gap of 27.2 percentage points. In Wirral 43.3% of free school meal pupils attained 5 A* - C including English and mathematics compared to 77.5% - a gap of 34.3 percentage points.

Methodology

To respond to the new requirements on Pupil Premium spend, a member of the School Improvement Team has been contacting schools to gather information regarding how Pupil Premium has been allocated, spent and the impact on raising attainment and closing the gap.

From September 30th 2012 schools have been required to publish their Pupil Premium action plan on the school website. All school websites were scrutinised. Where the information regarding the impact of Pupil Premium spend on pupil progress/attainment was not available on the website schools were contacted by phone.

Findings

The amount of Pupil Premium varied across the secondary schools, the largest sum received being in excess of £390,000. The funding was spent on a variety of areas including intervention programmes, a Health and Wellbeing mentor, school trips, alternative curriculum, smaller maths groups etc.

Best practice in some schools included a clear plan to spend the money with clear, measurable outcomes for pupil attainment and progress at the end of each year not just key stage. Pupil outcomes had been clearly evaluated with new actions set.

The gap between attainment of non free school meal pupils and free school meal pupils was compared. Comparison was made between the percentage points gap in 2012 and 2013. Of the twenty two secondary schools in Wirral seven schools demonstrated closing the free school meal gap.

In some cases where the gap widened Pupil Premium money had not been as focused as perhaps it could have been.

Three schools are using the RADY (Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Young people) project methodology for closing the gap; this project focuses on raising attainment of pupils in receipt of free school meals in Years 7 – 10, therefore, it will not be until August 2014 that the impact of the project can be evaluated.

Recommendations

- The progress of free school meal pupils continues to be monitored regularly, schools are actively encouraged to learn from best practice, and schools will be held accountable for outcomes for children in receipt of free school meals, with a particular focus on schools in Band 3 and Band 4.
- An HMI Ofsted signature event regarding the use of Pupil Premium to improve children's outcomes to be organised by EQ (Education Quality).
- The Ofsted Pupil Premium Analysis Tool (Reference 130045) to be distributed to schools for their use.
- An Annual report to be prepared for the Attainment Sub-Committee
- An Annual report to be shared with schools at Schools Forum after consideration by the Head Teacher consultation groups (Primary Head Consultation Group and Wirral Association of Secondary Head teachers)



The Pupil Premium -
How schools are spent



The Pupil Premium -
Analysis and challenge
