

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report begins the previously approved process of reviewing the schools formula funding changes in respect of deprivation, introduced in 2008-09. The report describes how this money is being spent in schools and indicates potential “narrow the gap” output measures.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Along with all local authorities Wirral was required to review the way in which the funding formula takes account of varying levels of deprivation across the borough and to consider whether more needed to be done to counter the educational impact of deprivation. Changes were to be implemented from 2008-09.

The findings of the Schools Forum working group resulted in a number of proposals to change the way deprivation is addressed:

- To redistribute funding allocated through floor area into the deprivation element (and also enhance AWPU)
- To continue to use Free School Meals within the deprivation element to allocate half the available funding, but to use the Index of Multiple Deprivation to allocate the remaining half.

A key control factor was to achieve a more accurate reflection through the local formula of the expectations of DCSF deprivation funding.

The changes were agreed and implemented in the 2008-09 and subsequent budget allocations. The operation of the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) has ensured that no school can actually lose money per pupil as a result of this formula change.

Schools benefiting from formula changes (by more than £10,000) were written to at the end of last term. The letter asked how they had spent the additional resources during the year and for their initial views on the effectiveness of the formula changes, in tackling issues arising from deprivation and raising standards. Schools were asked for indications of improved outcomes, for example attainment, attendance and behaviour.

Additional Funding

- 1.2 The overall increase in funding delivered by the new formula in excess of MFG cost pressures was £3.2m (comparing pupil funding in 2007-08 + 2.1% with 2008-09). This is summarised in the table below.

	2008-09		
	schools	average £	Total £
Primary	67	32,000	2,160,000
Secondary	9	101,000	906,000
Special	8	11,000	85,000

As indicated previously 2008-09 was the first year of a 3 year funding cycle. Further increases have been received in 2009-10 and are planned for 2010-11

1.3 School Information

The information from primary schools shows that about 85% of the additional resources have been targeted at staffing. The range of spend is shown below.

- Teachers/teaching assistants to work with smaller groups, booster groups and 1 to 1 tuition to improve English, Maths and Science
- Retaining teachers, particularly in Reading Recovery, to improve attainments in reading and writing
- More Teaching Assistant hours to support KS2 and intervention work
- Provision of educational IT equipment for curriculum development and assessment, eg interactive white boards
- Provide assessment and support for specific children with learning, behaviour, social and emotional needs, such as intervention programs
- Funding school trips for the most deprived children, so all are included
- Provide cover to release Deputy Head for planning and training
- Provide cover to release SENCO teacher full time
- Additional midday assistants to improve lunch time behaviour
- Greater support for special needs children not statemented, such as Orret's Meadow or Gilbrook outreach
- Provide SATS study support groups
- Enrich curriculum to encourage attendance and good behaviour
- Subsidised before and after school care
- Maintain current organisation/teaching structure, avoiding redundancies/deficit budgets
- Pay for increase in METRO school meals costs.

Initial indications from Secondary schools are that funding has contributed to improvements at GCSE, OFSTED and value added measures. The School Improvement Partner (SiP) will undertake further analysis and review later this term. This information will be included in the next report.

1.4 Narrowing the Gap

A number of schools have referred to improved results at KS2 and general improvements in core subjects. This information is currently being checked and should be finalised for the next Schools Forum. Specifically a comparison can be made using Super Output Areas. Schools in the 3% most deprived areas can be compared with the remaining 97%, giving a measure of the attainment gap for both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 (GCSE).

In 2007 and 2008 the gap was as follows:

	Key Stage 2			5+A*-C	5+A*-C inc E+M
	Sc	Eng	Maths		
2007	8.1	17.4	13.0	28.5	29
2008	9.3	14.2	16.4	25.3	30.1

When data has been checked and finalised for 2009 this will indicate if improvements in schools in more deprived areas have increased (between 2008 and 2009) at a faster rate than in other areas, so narrowing the attainment gap.

Data on school attendance will also be available for the next meeting.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A panel of members from the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review deprivation funding in 2009/10. The scope of the review is attached to this report. The specific areas are:

- To determine if the deprivation funding review carried out by Wirral has had an impact on closing the attainment gap
- And to determine if the review has had a negative impact on standards or attainment in any school.

The information contained in this report will help support the review by members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That

Deprivation funding be the subject of a further report to include the evaluation of attainment and attendance data.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services