

SecEd

Guide to...



Demonstrating Pupil Premium impact

Key content

- How can schools meet their statutory duties to show the impact that their Pupil Premium spending has had?
- What is the Department for Education looking for regarding Pupil Premium impact?
- An Ofsted Pupil Premium checklist – what will the inspectorate want to see?
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In association with

ASCL Association
of School and
College Leaders

GUIDE TO... Showing the impact of your Pupil Premium

Schools have, on the face of it, plenty of freedom to choose exactly how they spend the Pupil Premium funding ushered in by the coalition government just 18 months ago.

That freedom remains at the start of the 2012/13 academic year, says the Department for Education (DfE), but as the scale of Pupil Premium funding increases dramatically, the accountability that schools will have for the effective use of the funding is being ramped up significantly too.

School performance tables now include an indicator to show the attainment of pupils who are registered as eligible for free school meals (FSM) and those who have been looked-after in public care continuously for at least six months – this has been termed a “disadvantage” measure.

For the 2011/12 performance tables, to be published later this year and in early 2013, the disadvantage measure will also include those pupils who have been registered as eligible for FSM at any point in the last six years.

And from this month (September), schools will have to publish key information online which will include:

- The amount of Pupil Premium funding the school will receive in the current academic year.
- Details of how they plan to spend it.
- Details of how the previous academic funding was spent.
- The effect of this spending on the educational attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

Ofsted is also sharpening its focus on how schools spend the funding. Earlier this year, deputy prime minister Nick Clegg warned that Ofsted would be “looking forensically” at the effectiveness of schools’ Pupil Premium spending.

While the government is putting pressure on schools to account for the effectiveness of their Pupil Premium spending, it is not saying exactly how schools should do it. There will be no prescribed templates or guidance on how schools

should report this information. A DfE spokesman told *SecEd*: “We believe that schools should be free to decide how best to do this, including how to determine and describe the impact.”

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So what can schools do to satisfy the government and inspectors that Pupil Premium spending has been effective? How should they go about tracking, evaluating and reporting in this area?

“Schools should be able to make reasonable estimates on how the Pupil Premium has been spent based on the cost of the strategies that they have put in place,” explained Malcolm Trobe, deputy general secretary in charge of policy at the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL).

“They should have a plan that says these are the strategies that we have put in place and this is what we have spent on them.

“We are not saying that schools need to have these things spelt-out down to the last penny, but they need to make the link between the work they are doing and the cost to the school.

“The government wants schools to give an indication to parents of the cost-effectiveness of the work they are doing.

“For example, they’ll need to indicate that X amount of money has been spent on one-to-one tuition, Y on peer-to-peer support, this amount on monitoring, or that amount on providing specific support in terms of English and maths.”

By tracking the attainment of FSM pupils supported by the Pupil Premium funding, schools should then be able to determine their rate of improvement through national curriculum levels and reading ages.

Schools need to make informed decisions about the strategies they use, Mr Trobe added, based on their own needs. Schools should look at the growing research base to decide which approaches will deliver real value for money, he advises.

“Schools can get guidance on the cost-effectiveness of those strategies from research-based advice such as the teaching and learning toolkit recently published by the Sutton Trust and the Education Endowment Foundation (see further information). Lots of schools use one-to-one tutoring and small group support. This is effective but it is expensive. Schools will have to strike a balance between effectiveness and cost.

“The effectiveness of teaching assistants has been questioned by the teaching and learning toolkit, which also says that peer-to-peer support works and is quite a cheap and effective strategy. In the end, schools need to decide what works in their context. What works in one school will not necessarily work in another.”

Ofsted will be looking for evidence of the strategies that are in place to raise attainment among FSM pupils and what the costs of these are.

“It is pretty clear that they will be looking at whether youngsters are achieving the grades in English and maths. They will also be comparing the results of Pupil Premium-eligible pupils with the rest of the cohort and asking whether they are getting

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results as good as the rest of the school. They will be looking at how these pupils are doing compared to every pupil nationally.

Mr Trobe continued: “Ofsted will be looking at data and will be asking about the strategies that the school has in place and the effectiveness of these strategies.”

But it is not just about how good your data is – it is what you do with it. Mr Trobe explained: “There will be schools that have very good tracking mechanisms in place to follow every single subject in order to identify quickly where pupils are not

Pupil Premium key facts

The Pupil Premium is allocated to children from low-income families who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) in both mainstream and non-mainstream settings, and children who have been looked-after continuously for more than six months.

It was introduced in April 2011, and paid to local authorities by means of a specific grant based on January 2011 school census figures for pupils registered as eligible for FSM in reception to year 11. The Pupil Premium is paid to academies via the Young People’s Learning Agency.

The government has extended eligibility for the Pupil Premium in 2012/13 to pupils who have been eligible for FSM at any point in the last six years.

The level of the Premium in 2012/13 is £600 per pupil eligible for FSM and for pupils in care who have been continuously looked-after for six months.

making adequate progress so that they can take quick action to improve the situation for each youngster. Schools need to make sure that they have effective pupil tracking systems that allow them to do this.

“For schools that are having an issue with outcomes, one of the big questions Ofsted will ask is what they are doing to address the issues and what the impact of what they are doing is.

“Ofsted would expect schools that have identified a problem with pupil progress to address the issue quickly and have a positive impact on this within a six to eight week period.”

What Ofsted will be looking for

Ofsted says that its inspectors will be looking at how schools are using the Pupil Premium funding to help disadvantaged pupils and narrow the gap between the performance of different groups of pupils. When evaluating the achievement of pupils, inspectors will consider how well:

- Pupils make progress relative to their starting points.
- Pupils learn, the quality of their work in a range of subjects, and the progress they have made since joining the school.
- Pupils develop a range of skills, including reading, writing, communication and

mathematical skills, and how well they apply these across the curriculum.

- Pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education, training and/or employment.
- Disabled pupils and those who have SEN have achieved since joining the school.
- Gaps are narrowing between the performance of different groups of pupils, both in the school and in comparison to those of all pupils nationally.
- Pupils are attaining, taking into account the standards they attain by the time they leave the school, including their standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium have achieved since joining the school.

An Ofsted spokeswoman said: “Where we have seen that schools have been innovative and they have used the Pupil Premium money allocated to them well, we will comment on this in the inspection report.

“We also have a good practice website where we can promote good practice in schools. However we won’t tell schools how to spend Pupil Premium funding. Obviously in some cases it will be too soon to see how spending of the funding will have made an impact, for example if the money is spent on additional staff, and we will consider this when making judgements.”

Further information

- ASCL is holding a conference on closing the gap on March 5, 2013. Visit: www.ascl.org.uk/PD/conferences/One_day_conferences/closing_gap_conference
- ASCL has also made available to members a model form for reporting on the Pupil Premium: www.ascl.org.uk/key_topics/resources/pupil_premium_spend
- A new edition of *The Teaching and Learning Toolkit* is available from the Sutton Trust and Education Endowment Foundation at: www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/
- *SecEd* has run a number of news and best practice articles on the Pupil Premium, including on how schools can evaluate their Pupil Premium work. See a list of recent articles here: <http://bit.ly/OFXMPs>
- More details about how Ofsted inspectors make judgements, including about pupils’ achievement, can be found at: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/school-inspection-handbook-september-2012
- A range of information and resources are available from the Department for Education’s Pupil Premium web pages: www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/premium

Finding what works



Brian Lightman
General secretary, ASCL

The Pupil Premium is immensely important and is welcomed by school leaders. At a time when school budgets are under increasing pressure it is good news indeed that a very significant sum of money has been set aside to help them to continue to tackle educational disadvantage. The amount schools receive will obviously vary depending on their intake, but for many it will be substantial, especially as the funding increases towards the target level of £2.5 billion by the end of this Parliament.

At a time when such funding could have easily been diverted away from education, it is incumbent upon school leaders to take the accountability for this expenditure very seriously.

While the funding is allocated on the basis of the proxy indicator relating to free school meals, many schools will be using the Pupil Premium within the context of a coherent whole-school policy, identifying and implementing the most effective strategies in order to narrow the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged within their intakes.

There is a growing body of evidence to support schools as they plan for this. The Education Endowment Foundation toolkit identifies strategies with proven effectiveness and is developing a wealth of case study material to build upon this. ASCL is undertaking a research project which will draw upon and share the vast amount of effort ASCL members are putting into this important aspect of their work.

Nevertheless, a health warning has to be attached to the Pupil Premium. There are no quick fixes for social mobility and schools can only be part of the solution. If there had been, then the problem would have been solved decades ago. ASCL is continuing to make this point to the government.

What works in one school or one area of the country may not necessarily be as effective elsewhere and we must be wary of drawing hasty conclusions from the apparent success of one particular initiative in one school; success is often the sum total of a wide range of effective and high quality leadership strategies.

What we do know, however, is that the most effective strategies in any school invariably focus on improving teaching. It is already clear from work that has taken place in the early stages of this initiative that money spent on professional development activities in the classroom can provide very good value.

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Many schools will use the Pupil Premium funding to continue to build upon projects which previously attracted other external funding and proved to be successful.

There is nothing wrong with this, provided that there is a clear audit trail between the funding that has come in for this purpose and the activities directed at those pupils for whom it was intended. Schools will need to focus strongly on this within their self-evaluation and information about Pupil Premium expenditure must be published. ASCL has provided members with guidance on suitable formats for such reporting.

Good teaching matters

Case study: William Parker Sports College

William Parker is an all-boys comprehensive in an area of deprivation in Hastings, East Sussex. With 17 per cent of pupils receiving free school meals (FSM), the Pupil Premium funding is playing a key role in targeting underachievement.

“The boys’ literacy levels are not where I want to be them to be,” said headteacher John Court. “To raise standards we’ve looked at what would have the greatest impact for free school meals and other vulnerable students. In fact all youngsters.”

Using the funding to bring in more staff has been central to William Parker’s Pupil Premium strategy.

“We made a big commitment to literacy, including it as an additional timetable commitment as well as English. We’ve also appointed two leadership specialists and an extra mathematician.

“The first year we had the Pupil Premium we used this to partly fund a temporary assistant head to look after vulnerable groups but she has now been made permanent.

“We used to bring temporary staff in to deliver literacy interventions with small groups and one-to-ones but the funding has helped us to bring in more permanent staff to do this. There are distinct advantages to doing it this way: permanent staff are au fait with our curriculum, our teaching strategies and our students. And they understand our protocols and processes.

“We would say that small groups and having staff available with the right expertise has paid off for us dramatically – we have dramatically reduced the attainment gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils over the last 12 months. It’s about the teachers who have the skills to narrow the gap being part of the institution, rather than dropping in and then going off to somewhere else.”

The funding has obviously been a boon to the

school, but exactly how is William Parker Sports College evaluating the effectiveness of Pupil Premium spending?

Tracking of the impact of the Pupil Premium on FSM pupils has been key, Mr Court continued. “Our data team has set FSM pupils up as discrete, trackable groups. We’ve worked closely with our primary feeder schools so that we can track pupils

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as soon as they transfer to our school and we track literacy and numeracy levels on entering.

“We do data trawls every 12 weeks. We know if a group is maintaining its progress or slipping down.” This “microscopic tracking”, as Mr Court describes it, is supplemented by fortnightly meetings to look at the progress of underachieving children and a large programme of intervention during half-terms and the Easter holidays.

“When Ofsted comes into school they want to see impact,” he explained. “Our aim is that whatever starting position the pupils are at, they will achieve the same as everyone else. There is still a gap across the local authority on FSM achievement. Our role is to narrow that gap.”

Mr Court has advice for other school leaders wanting to evaluate the effectiveness of Pupil Premium spending: “Work those groups, show data and progress over time. Have the evidence of what you have in place and evidence of the outcomes.”

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