



**Scrutiny Committee**  
30 April 2015

**Report from the Chief Operating Officer**

Wards Affected:  
ALL

**Covering Report for Scrutiny Task Group on  
Use of the Pupil Premium in Brent**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This task group has been requested by the Scrutiny Members in responses to borough priorities to improve attainment for disadvantaged pupils. This covering report focuses on the task group's findings and recommendations.
- 1.2 The purpose of the task group is to focus on analysing the current use of the Pupil Premium Grant, Understanding the attainment gaps, the outcomes which are being achieved in comparison with national performance and to promote best practice among Brent schools.
- 1.3 Making sure that all Brent schools are good quality and that all pupils achieve well is an objective within the Council's Borough Plan. Effective use of the pupil premium across Brent schools is one element within the context of good overall performance.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee consider the contents of the report.
- 2.2 The Scrutiny Committee approves the 16 recommendations made by the task group.

**3.0 Detail**

**3.1 The key findings which have emerged from the task groups work focused on:**

**Data Analysis - Closing the attainment gap**

The task group found that there are a number of influencing factors which contribute to the gap in attainment. It was clear that the gap became wider as children progressed through school and that early intervention is key to progress and closing the gap for all disadvantaged groups.

### **Setting the tone for Brent Schools – The Vision**

The task group found that all children disadvantaged or not, are likely to do better in higher quality schools. One of Brent's priorities is improving school quality by raising overall achievement. Moreover, school improvement has a large role to play in narrowing the gap because the achievement gain in moving from an inadequate school to an outstanding school is bigger for those who are the most disadvantaged. Mitigating the effects of child poverty and reducing it are key drivers of improving children and families' health and wellbeing. Children and young people should be able to enjoy their education and achieve the best results they can. The council's vision is to raise educational standards at all key stages and close attainment gaps between groups.

### **Coordinated Schools Strategic Leadership: Sharing good practice, information, resources – including teaching staff and training – teachers and school governing bodies;**

The task group found that to improve outcomes for all children requires good strategic partnership working, where schools take the lead. Good quality data provided centrally is also essential; schools can benchmark themselves against other schools locally and nationally. Schools should be in a position to network and use local support from the council and other partners to improve performance and attainment.

### **Improving outcomes for Looked After Children and Children Excluded from School**

After analysing the data on Looked after Children (LAC) the task group felt that as corporate parents of LAC, we need to do a much better job; starting with achieving 100 percent of Personal Education Plans (PEPS) for Looked After Children are completed to the highest quality. The task group felt that further analysis is required for disadvantaged children who were excluded from school. Children, who are excluded for a fixed period, could also benefit from additional targeted support when attending PRUs.

### **Innovation and Advancement in Education**

The task group found that Brent schools are already very innovative and creative with their interventions on closing the attainment gap. There were wonderful examples of Brent secondary and primary schools trying unconventional interventions and being able to show impact and improved outcomes for children. However advancements in education attainment is continuously evolving and to keep abreast of this, requires constant research and trials, which should be embedded as part of day to day life in schools.

### **What do our young people want?**

The task group found that it is not just formal academic or vocational qualifications which hamper young people's chances of securing employment. National and regional research indicates a lack of 'employability' skills – for example, Basic English language and financial numeracy - as a significant barrier for employers looking to recruit. The consultation exercise conducted as part of the Employment & Enterprise strategy identified this as a significant issue in Brent, particularly amongst young people and those for whom English is a second language (EAL).

### **Supporting Parents and Building Self-Resilience**

We found that identifying parents who need support early will be key to improving attainment and closing the gap. Data shows that the gap often occurs during early years, this is a time when parents need to have the parental skills to ensure that their child's progress is on track and they are not underperforming. The task group welcome the Early Years PPG (April 2015) and believe that work with early years setting will be essential to the grant being implemented and utilised effectively.

#### **3.2 It is recommended that:**

1. LB Brent and Brent Schools Partnership (BSP) support a borough wide approach for the use of PPG through the implementation of the Education Commission Action Plan – Ambitious for All. The Strategy is to be monitored by the Strategic School Effectiveness Partnership Board and should include:
  - networking & sharing good practice
  - the sharing of information
  - the sharing of resources
  - training for Teachers and additional support to School governing bodies

\*This will require a clearly outlined and smooth transition of services currently being delivered by the LB Brent, School Effectiveness service.

2. The School Effectiveness Partnership Board promotes the benefits of BSP to the whole community of schools so all schools become members and benefit from its support and services.
3. BSP works proactively with the community of schools and holds a list of recommended and effective Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) services and providers, so schools are able to commission services individually or collectively with other schools. In time, BSP may wish to explore a shared staff resource for collating and distributing the latest evidence from organisations like the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and working with schools to tailor it to meet their specific needs.
4. Pupil Premium and PPG related updates are to be standing agenda items at the Brent Head Teachers and School Governors annual conferences.
5. BSP, Brent and Woodfield Teaching Schools Alliance (BTSA & WTSA) continue their work with schools to ensure high quality teaching across Brent's schools and that outstanding teachers and support staff are being attracted, retained and developed across the borough.
6. LB Brent develops specific targeted approaches to closing the attainment gap for Looked After Children (LAC) which are monitored regularly by the Corporate Parenting Committee. This should include:
  - Empowering foster carers to engage fully with schools.
  - Strengthening working relationships between foster carers, designated teachers and social workers to improve outcomes.
  - Ensure 100 percent of Personal Education Plans (PEPS) for Looked After Children are completed to the highest quality.

- Tracking the progress of Looked After Children, identifying and investing in successful interventions: - reporting and identifying impact.
7. During 2015 BSP along with the LB Brent begins scoping a borough wide project and applies to work with the Education Endowment Foundation. In particular projects which focus on the Transition between Primary and Secondary school, English as an Additional Language (EAL) and projects focusing on children arriving from Eastern Europe.
  8. The LB Brent in partnership with BSP encourages schools to find alternative methods for recording non academic/formative learning (e.g. music, sports, arts and social development) which support attainment and support schools to engage with Ofsted regarding the evaluation of these interventions.
  9. BSP to encourage schools to employ (and possibly share as a resource) Careers Advisors. This will provide a mechanism for increasing the numbers of available work experience opportunities and the participation of Brent's pupils in work-based skills development.
  10. An increased coordinated effort by the LB Brent, Community of Brent Schools, Brent Early Years Settings including Children Centres and parents in completing Free School Meal application forms. In particular, the task group would welcome efforts to remove the stigma from making applications and the promotion of the idea that extra funding will benefit all young people in the borough.
  11. Early Years Settings to identify eligible children at 3 and 4 years of age and promote the extra support available. This information should follow the child into school.
  12. LB Brent and BSP to continue to work within the Early Years Settings and build on the success of the 2015 Early Years (EYs) Conference, where PPG was an agenda item. The conference might follow up with case studies from the pilot authorities.
  13. Schools and the Early Years Settings increase their efforts with support of BSP (sharing effective practice) to empower and engage parents on ways to provide support to their children, including encouraging them to take up adult learning opportunities and access any additional support that the family requires.
  14. The LB Brent's Annual Review of Standards demonstrates closing the gap by finding and implementing practical and creative effective methods. The review should also include an analysis of pupil premium children's attainment compared to non pupil premium children's attainment with a breakdown by vulnerable groups such as:
    - Pupils excluded
    - Looked After Children
    - Children in Need and;
    - Ethnic minority and other groups being monitored for underachievement such as Somali, Black Caribbean, White boys.

\*The Corporate Parenting Committee's Looked After Children's report should be presented at Full Council

15. LB Brent and BSP work with Early Years Settings and the community of Primary and Secondary Schools on a borough wide transfer policy which ensures successful intervention methods and information on PPG children is included, so that this information follows the child throughout their school life.

16. Further analysis is conducted by LB Brent and Schools into fixed term exclusions of PPG children and practical ways schools can continue to support PPG children if excluded to the borough's Pupil Referral Units (PRU).

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 None

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 The council has a legal obligation to eliminate discrimination, to which this work focuses on reducing the inequality of disadvantaged children.

#### **6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 The recommendations outlined in the report will have positive impacts on Brent's communities and drive services; which will improve the educational and life outcomes all Brent children.

#### **7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

7.1 The following Brent services and partners would be affected by the recommendations made:

- Brent Schools Effectiveness
- Brent Children's Social Care (Looked after Children - LAC)
- Early Help and Education
- Inclusion and Alternative Education
- Brent Schools Partnership
- Brent Teaching Schools Alliance (BTSA)
- Woodfield Teaching Schools Alliance (WTSA)

#### **Background Papers**

[Interim Report - Use of the Pupil Premium Grant in Brent](#)

#### **Contact officers**

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