



Scrutiny Committee
10 February 2015

**Report from the Assistant Chief
Executive**

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Use of the Pupil Premium Grant Task group
Interim Feedback**

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The use of the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) task group was requested by both scrutiny and non scrutiny members. It was recognised that this was one of the last grants still available to schools and members wanted assurance that schools and educational bodies were making the best use of it.
- 1.2 There are over 1.4 million (21%) children aged 4-15 eligible for free school meals in this country. National figures show that they will often start primary school behind their better-off classmates - and this attainment gap will increase throughout their schooling. The latest national figures show just 37% of disadvantaged children achieved 5 good GCSEs, including English and Maths, compared to 63% of all other pupils. Children from poorer backgrounds do worse on average than their wealthier classmates whichever type of school they are in. Young people with poor educational attainment are much more likely to end up not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- 1.3 It is for these reasons that members of the scrutiny function wanted to review the borough's use of the Pupil Premium Grant, ensuring that the local authority with its partners is doing all it can to improve the chance of better educational and life outcomes for all our young people.
- 1.4 The review considers the following areas:
- How the allocation of pupil premium is helping to narrow the attainment gap between those eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils in Brent.
 - How schools in Brent have been spending, managing and monitoring the PPG
 - To investigate whether there is a relationship between schools with the highest proportion of eligible pupils and their use of the PPG.
 - Identifying good practice in Brent schools, across the UK and learning from national organisations such as the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

- How schools in Brent spend the premium more effectively to raise pupil attainment.
- How a wider range of educational input such as music, drama and sport, can be used to show how a whole-rounded approach to education can increase attainment levels.
- The Future of the Pupil Premium in Brent - future funding, changes from May 2015 onwards

1.5 The aims of the review are set out below:

- To set out the shared expectations of how PPG is to be used and monitored in schools across Brent.
- Identify ways in which the local authority and other partners can effectively support Brent schools to increase attainment through use of the PPG.
- Influence school policies on effective management and monitoring of the PPG.
- Create a culture for schools to encourage and support each other for the long-term.
- Encourage further sharing of best practice within Brent schools and nationally, with the aim that Brent schools are recognised for their effective use of the PPG.

2. Key Emerging Recommendations

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are requested note the emerging recommendations:

- 2.1 London Borough of Brent is to set the tone for the use of the PPG through the implementation of the Education Commission Action Plan – Ambitious for All..
- 2.2 London Borough of Brent and Brent Schools Partnership (BSP) are to provide strategic leadership for Brent schools through the Strategic School Effectiveness Partnership Board:
- Sharing good practice
 - Sharing information
 - Sharing resources
- 2.3 London Borough of Brent develops specific targeted approaches to closing the attainment gap for Looked After Children (LAC) by:
- Empowering foster carers.
 - Develop strong working relationships between foster carers, designated teachers and social workers.
 - Promptly completing Personal Education Plans (PEPS) for Looked After Children.
 - Tracking the progress of Looked After Children, identifying and investing in successful interventions: - reporting and identifying impact.
- 2.4 Specific work with schools in attracting, employing and retaining good teaching staff.
- 2.5 BSP along with the London Borough of Brent begins scoping borough wide projects for working with the Education Endowment Foundation.

- 2.6 Encourage Brent schools to employ (and possibly share as a resource) young persons Careers Advisors. The task group also champions work experience for young people and encourages schools to allow pupils to participate.
- 2.7 Empowering and engaging parents to provide support to their children and encouraging adult learning.

3. Detailed Considerations

Methodology of the task group

- 3.1 As part of this review the task group invited relevant partners to contribute through workshops, discussion groups and one-to-one interviews.
- 3.2 The task group started by focusing its efforts on gathering the national, regional and local picture on the use of pupil premium. Firstly meeting with the Operational Director Early Help and Education and senior School Effectiveness staff, the group has also met with the leading Government and Non Government Organisations such as Department for Education (DfE), Achievement for All and Education Endowment Foundation. The group also met with The Brent Schools Partnership chair and co-ordinator and the Brent Schools Forum
- 3.3 Using information provided via the DfE, the task group met with the Director of Education at London Borough of Lambeth for good practice. The next step of the task group's work was to visit a sample group of Brent schools and to consult with Brent stakeholders. There were discussion meetings with Brent School Governors, parent groups and the Brent Youth Parliament. A sample group of six Brent Primary and Secondary Schools were visited and the task group consulted with teaching staff, governors and children from each of these schools.

Background to the Pupil Premium

- 3.4 The grant is allocated directly to schools to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils from reception to year 11. For children looked after through the council, a percentage is held back to provide for local authority support. A national fund of £625 million was introduced in April 2011 to give schools £400 per year for:
- Each child currently registered as eligible for free school meals.
 - Children who have been looked after for 6 months or longer.
 - Service children (parent are in the armed forces)
- 3.5 In April 2012, pupil premium funding was also extended to all children eligible for free school meals at any point in the past 6 years. In the current financial year (2014 to 2015) the pupil premium national funding was increased to £2.5 billion. The premium is broken down as follows:
- £1,300 per pupil of primary-school age.
 - £935 per pupil of secondary-school age.
 - £1,900 per pupil for looked-after children who:
 - have been looked after for 1 day or more
 - are adopted
 - leave care under a Special Guardianship Order or a Residence Order
- 3.6 Published in July 2014 Ofsted provided an update following the 2012 and 2013 reports. The update focuses on some of the more positive outcomes that are being achieved through use of the PPG. Ofsted state that the pupil premium is making a difference in many schools. Overall, school leaders are spending pupil premium funding more effectively, tracking the progress of eligible pupils more closely and reporting outcomes more precisely than before.

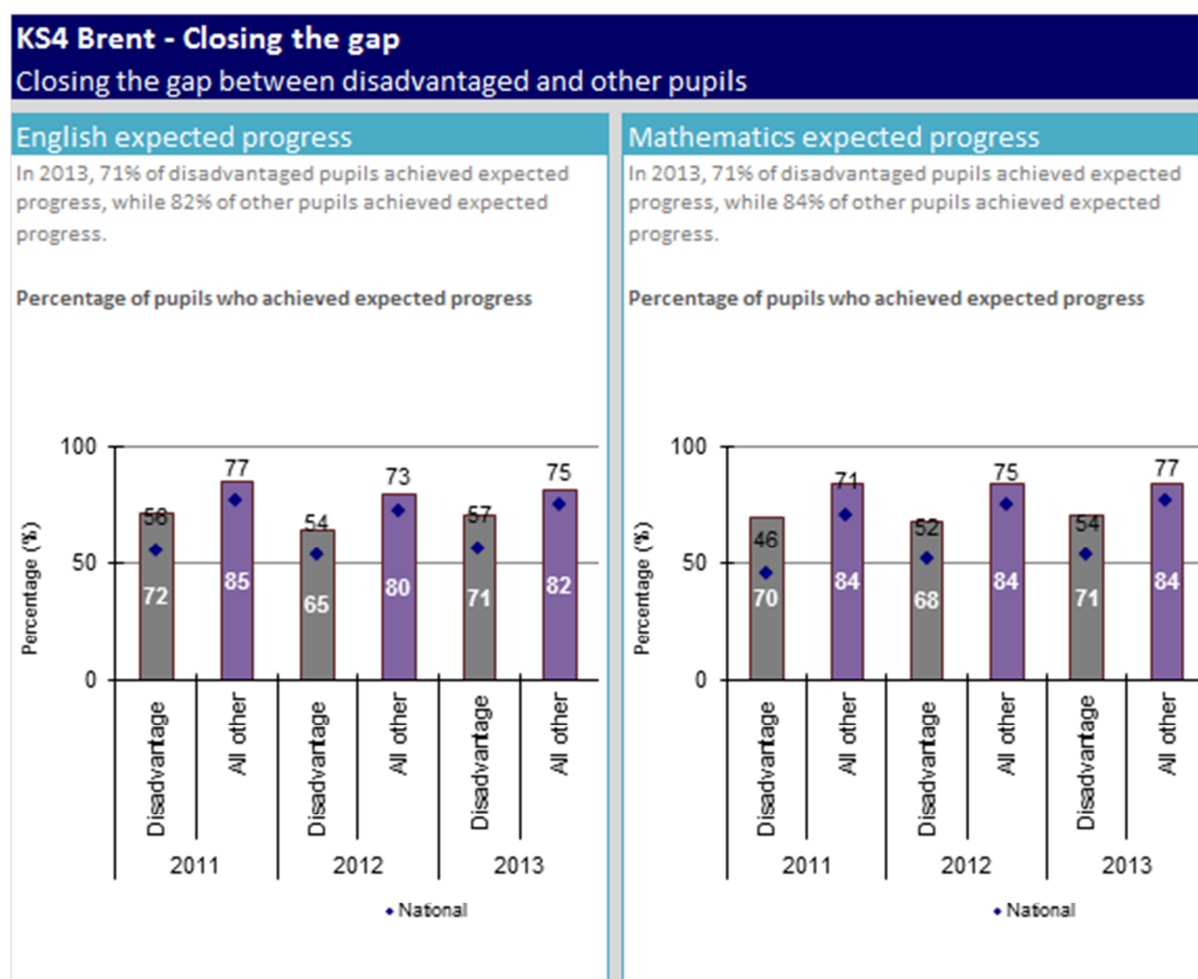
- 3.7 There are encouraging signs from Ofsted inspection that the concerted efforts of good leaders and teachers are helping to increase outcomes for pupils eligible for the pupil premium. However, it will take time to establish whether this increased focus will lead to a narrowing in the attainment gap between those eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils.

3.8 *Emerging Key Findings*

The key findings which emerged from consultation focused on:

Data Analysis - Closing the attainment gap

The most recent Brent data (Jan 2015) shows that Brent's disadvantaged pupil premium performance for KS1 in Reading, Writing and Maths is above the national averages, but is still below that of their peers, who are not disadvantaged. The same can be said about KS2, and KS4, however at KS4 the gap becomes significantly wider. In 2013 the gap in English for KS4 was -11%, which was an improvement from 2012 where the gap was -15%. In 2013 the gap in Maths was -13% which again was an improvement from 2012 gap of -16%. We are expecting to see the 2014 performance data shortly and hope that the upward trend continues to close the gap. We must ensure that we are making the best use of the PPG and support the fantastic work that our schools are doing, making bigger steps to close the attainment gaps.



Setting the tone for Brent Schools – The Vision

The task group wanted to be clear about the local authority and the borough's intentions and therefore set the tone for education in Brent. The local authority's impending Borough Plan correlates the task group's findings with direct or indirect links to all of the three priorities.

The Vision

Our vision is that Brent is recognised as a centre of excellence in the effective use of the Pupil Premium. In Brent Schools Pupil Premium is used to have the greatest impact; and contributes to raising attainment and achieving wider borough objectives.

Coordinated Schools Strategic Leadership:

There are a number of groups working in Brent to improve educational and life outcomes for young people. These groups often work in partnership and the task group want to encourage and support this to happen in a much more strategic and coordinated manner

- **Share Good Practice**
Build on established networks to share teaching practices that improve outcomes for children and establish itself as a centre of excellence.
- **Share Information**
Share data and information which will help schools to identify trends, make informed decisions and planning for their future needs.
- **Share Resources – including teaching staff**
Schools could benefit from sharing and pooling their resources e.g. commissioning in PPG services (economies of scale). Share specialist teaching staff and develop a strategy for retaining good and outstanding teachers.
- **Providing Quality Training for Teachers and School Governors**
Provide high quality training to Brent Teachers and School Governors, so that all of our schools are of the highest quality and the attainment needs of all of our children (disadvantaged or non disadvantaged) are met.

Improving outcomes for Looked After Children

It is unfortunate that the national picture for improving the attainment gap for Looked after Children is poor and is on a downward trend. Brent's LAC Key stage 4 attainment figures fell by 10% to 9% in 2013-14 academic year, compared to the national average of 20%. As corporate parents it is the direct responsibility of the local authority to ensure that we are doing our very best to improve the outcomes for LAC Children; there must be improvements. Member challenge is provided through the Corporate Parenting Committee which scrutinised the LAC education attainment report at its meeting in December 2014. After discussions with Brent's Virtual Head teacher it was highlighted that there is scope for more cohesive working between LAC Children Social workers and the Inclusion and Alternative Education team.

In Brent, the policy is to allocate a fixed amount of £1300 to schools to support financial planning and the different support needs of the child. The Personal Education Plan (PEP) needs to be agreed by the Virtual Head, Designated Teacher and child's Social Worker. The remaining £600 for each child will be retained centrally and has been arranged to be spent on career guidance and interventions projects delivered during school holidays. Schools

and Virtual Heads are mindful that any centrally held grant cannot be carried forward into a new financial year, and unspent grant will be recovered by the DfE after 31 March 2015.

Innovation and Advancement in Education

The findings from the tasks groups review found that many schools had invested their PPG money in non academic interventions and programmes which enrich the lives of children. However schools found it challenging to directly link those interventions to impacts, where children were more confident or showed behavioural improvements. Schools believe that there is not enough recognition from central government or Ofsted of the importance on providing a holistic educational experience that supports children not just to achieve academically; but also emotionally and socially.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an independent grant-making charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement, ensuring that children from all backgrounds can fulfil their potential and make the most of their talents.

What do young our people want?

The task group consulted with Brent's young people, through the Brent Youth Parliament and through visits to schools. The task group spoke with young people from years 3-11 (ages 4-16). Their comments varied across the age ranges with younger children wanting more creative activities like trips and excursions; while older children wanted more support preparing for the work place once they leave school; specifically careers advice.

Our young people really enjoy learning and gave lots of praise to their teacher, but wished there was more support in the class room and more teachers who inspired them to learn.

Supporting Parents and Building Self-Resilience

During the task group's consultation with schools, children's centres and local authority officers, it was stated from a number of sources that parents needed additional support. Services for children need to consider how to engage further with parents and empower them to support the progress of their child by:

- Understanding what is happening with their child at school.
- Encouraging study and attainment to reinforce messages in the school environment.
- Filling in forms for free school meals etc.
- Co-operating with teachers and schools.
- Understanding the areas where their child needs to make progress and the standards that are expected.

This may mean training and courses; learning skills that they need to grow aspiration and becoming role models for their children; encouraged to draw on various resources such as parental engagement and involvement in schools, e.g. attending parent's evenings and meetings on school curriculum, children's homework, teaching maths, using tablets and pcs with your child etc.

- Parents' attending local children's centres and parents Forums (parent voice).

- Adult learning through Brent Start, schools and children's centres.
- Voluntary and community groups – support and volunteering.
- Website information and newsletters (school).
- School liaison officer if available.

Next Steps

- 3.19 The Pupil Premium Scrutiny task group is hoping to meet with Ofsted as it has specific enquires regarding the evaluation methods for non academic (sports, arts and social development) PPG support for children. The PPG will also be visiting a number of Brent based PPG service providers. The completed task group report will be presented to the Scrutiny committee in April.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 There are no diversity implications arising directly from this report.

Full Report – Scrutiny Committee, 30 April 2015

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