

## PUPIL PREMIUM: GUIDANCE FOR COMMITTEE SCRUTINY

### WHAT IS THE PUPIL PREMIUM?

The Pupil Premium was introduced to help schools to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. It is based on eligibility for Free School Meals at any point in the preceding six years (*NB – this is a means-tested measure and is not related to Universal Infant Free School Meals*).

Research shows that children from low-income families often perform less well at school than their peers, facing challenges such as poor language and communication skills, lack of confidence and issues with attendance and punctuality, which prevents them from fulfilling their potential. The Government believes that the Pupil Premium is the best way to address the underlying inequalities between children eligible for FSM and their wealthier peers, by ensuring that funding to tackle disadvantage reaches those pupils who need it most.

### WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

The committee will want to be confident that the school is spending the grant for the purposes intended by Parliament – i.e. to boost the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils in order to close the historic attainment gap.

The committee also has a role in maintaining an ethos of high expectations. The pupil premium is an imperfect measure of educational disadvantage and the link between poverty and attainment is not a determinative one.

Given their accountability for holding schools to account for educational performance, committee members and trustees are required to scrutinise schools' plan for and use of their pupil premium funding. Schools are held accountable for the outcomes they achieve with this funding, including through Ofsted inspections and by trustees.

### NEED TO KNOW

The PP per-pupil rate for 2023 to 2024 is as follows:

Reception to year 6	£1,455
Years 7 to 11	£1035
Looked After Children (incl. previously)	£2,530
Service children (Reception to Year 11)	£335

Data source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/pupil-premium>

To ensure that pupil premium is focused on effective approaches to raising the educational attainment of disadvantaged pupils, schools must use their pupil premium in line with the 'menu of approaches' set by the Department for Education.

The menu has been developed in line with the [EEF's 3-tiered approach](#) to help school allocate spending across the following 3 areas:

- supporting the high-quality teaching, such as staff professional development
- providing targeted academic support, such as tutoring, including through the National Tutoring Programme
- tackling non-academic barriers to academic success, such as difficulties in attendance, behaviour and social and emotional wellbeing

Each school must publish an account of their Pupil Premium spending on their website every academic year. As a minimum, the same information should be reported to LGCs/TMBs. This must include:

- a summary of the school's Pupil Premium allocation for the current academic year;
- details of how the school intends to spend the allocation – including priority areas of focus (in response to identified barriers for pupils eligible for PP, including high ability);
- details of how the school spent its previous academic year's allocation; and
- evidence of impact – i.e. how it made a difference to the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

#### **FACT-FINDING: WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW?**

- What is the purpose of the pupil premium funding? How much is it? How is it spent? Why? Who decides? Who evaluates and on what basis?
- Are both the PP strategy and the review of last year's spending published on the school website? Does the strategy: Give details of how the resources are to be allocated? Give an overview of the actions to be taken? Give a summary of the expected outcomes? Identify ways of monitoring the effectiveness of these actions as they are ongoing? Explain what will be evaluated at the end of the action and what measures of success will be applied?
- Does the strategy reflect spending across the three-tiered areas recommended in the [EEF's pupil premium guide](#):
  - Quality of Teaching
  - Targeted Academic Support
  - Wider Strategies (non-academic barriers and outcomes)
- What are the main barriers for learning faced by disadvantaged pupils at the school? What is the current gap (if any) in attainment and progress between PP/other children? Is this being addressed in the PP Strategy?
- Are digitally disadvantaged pupils supported to access any remote learning required?
- How is the school encouraging potentially eligible families to register for the pupil premium – especially prior to the October census date?
- Is there a correlation between PP pupils and poor attendance/behaviour/ exclusion? If so, why and is this being addressed in the PP Strategy?
- From the PP Strategy, is it clear how the Pupil Premium Lead is supporting curriculum development?

#### **DIGGING DEEPER: GUIDANCE FOR STRONGER SCRUTINY**

- Additional scrutiny could be rendered by exploring individual aspects of the spend, i.e. by probing the connection between barriers to learning and the proportions of spend.
- Research - what does it tell us about how pupil premium funding should be deployed? What are the most successful schools (UK and overseas) doing to drive high performance amongst disadvantaged pupils? To what extent does this school do the same? Are the spending choices informed by research and are research links evident for each spending decision?
- Strategy – explore how the spending contributes towards strategic, multi-year objectives. Does it anticipate needs being dynamic? Is it resilient to spikes in eligibility? Does the school intend to push funding down the age range in future years in order to shift from 'catch-up' to 'head starts'?

- Explore any correlations between PP pupils and poor attendance/behaviour/exclusion. Is this being addressed? If a number of PP pupils have been permanently excluded, what is the impact on the strategy and funding? *(As this results in a funding reduction per child pro-rated to the point in the financial year that the pupil left).*

#### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The Education Endowment Fund's pupil premium guide provides detailed information on strategies, case studies and research on effective use: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/pupil-premium-guide/>

The Education Endowment Fund Big Picture has evidence and resources that look at high priority issues for schools: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/school-themes/>