

TITLE	Progress On Narrowing The Gap In Pupil Performance For Those Children In Receipt Of The Pupil Premium Grant
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 November 2013
WARD	None Specific
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR	Pauline Maddison, Interim Strategic Director for Children's Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The purpose of this initiative is that pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant achieve the same attainment results as those peers who are not in receipt of this Grant, and their life chances and opportunities are enhanced as a result.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted: specifically the current gap in attainment and the steps being taken by officers in partnership with schools to improve the outcome.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

In 2012 the gap between the attainment of pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in Wokingham Borough Council schools was unacceptably wide. At Key Stage 2, 82% of all pupils achieved a Level 4+ in English and Maths, whilst only 60% of pupils in receipt of a Free School Meal achieved a similar standard, a gap of 22%. At Key Stage 4, 69% of all students achieved 5+ Grade A*-C including English and maths against only 28% in receipt of a free school meal, a gap of 41%%.

For summer 2013 early indications suggest that the gap at Key Stage 4 has narrowed slightly: 75% of all students gaining 5+ A* – C including English and maths compared to 36% in receipt of a free school meal: a gap of 39% and a reduction of 2% from 2012. As members already know, the gap at Key Stage 2 has widened. Officers, schools and external agencies are working together to narrow these gaps as speedily as possible.

This report summarises the different work-streams currently underway to achieve the very best outcomes for our children and young people.

1. Background

Traditionally, pupils at all stages in the borough in receipt of a Free School Meal (FSM), have underperformed when compared with their non-FSM peers. Initial investigations into this have revealed a strong correlation between pupils in receipt of a free school meal and those pupils with special educational needs. The government's introduction of the Pupil Premium Grant in April 2011 has led to a very strong focus nationally on this sub-group of pupils, now often referred to by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI), as belonging to 'poor families.' In September 2011 a School Improvement Officer (SIO), was charged with coordinating the narrowing this gap agenda in partnership with other officers.

2. Work Undertaken 2011/2013

- In the summer of 2011, the Service Manager for Learning and Achievement completed a review of successful strategies for narrowing the gap in partnership with the Secondary Federation. A useful report on this work was published that summer, which has been a feature of the work in secondary settings.

The following areas of work were successfully completed in 2012/2013:

- A major borough-wide conference to look at the issues surrounding the narrowing the gap agenda was held in February 2012. This included a lecture by a senior lecturer from the University of Exeter, who shared the research evidence available on the effectiveness of 1-1 tuition
- Pupil Premium (PP) children have been and continue to be a major focus for SIOs during their visits to schools, especially when standards and achievement are the focus of discussions with senior school leaders
- Narrowing the gap issues were the focus of discussions and inputs at the annual cross-phase forum between primary and secondary phase senior leaders in April 2013
- The WBC Youth Service funded an officer to undertake work alongside Year 10 and 11 pupils at two schools who are in receipt of the PP but are not meeting expectations.
- A team around the PP has implemented a number of initiatives borough-wide, not least the introduction of the notion of PP 'Champions' in our schools. This particular piece of work is exploring some of the issues faced by some of our most challenging pupils and their families who are also in receipt of our PP. This highlights the effects of low self-esteem in the adults as well as the pupils in these families, generational low achievement and generational low aspirations. The results of this work and their implications, will be shared borough-wide as they become known
- A special focus is placed on pupils who are the subject of Child in Need and Child Protection meetings within the practices of Social Care, and who are also in receipt of the PP to ensure this additional funding is being used appropriately.
- A special focus is placed on pupils who are the subject of discussions at the termly school planning meetings with neighbourhood teams and who are also in receipt of the PP to ensure this additional funding is being use appropriately.
- The Education Welfare Service begins work with families when the attendance of PP pupils drops below 90%
- SIOs are briefed and aware of additional initiatives across Children's Services; for

instance our Family First programme

- Governors have been briefed on the use of the PP, both at the summer term Chairs of Governors' Briefing and the SEN Governors' Briefing
- HMI, with a particular interest in the use of the PP, have addressed meetings of school head teachers and senior leaders in June 2013
- School Nurses are taking a special note of pupils in receipt of the PP to ensure sufficient support and advice is being given to families
- Cluster Coordinators/Managers have been briefed on the issues outlined in this report and are in a pivotal position to provide access to a range of activity to ease parental organisational and financial burdens, aid additional learning opportunities and provide opportunities to strengthen self-esteem
- The Government's PP Champion, is addressing our school head teachers and senior leaders on the issues nationwide on December 12th 2013. It is hoped to hold a pre-meeting with him prior to this address in order to brief him on local issues and initiatives.

3. Analysis of Issues

3.1 The gap in the performance of a number of PP pupils in a number of our schools compared to the performance of all other pupils continues to cause concern. Consequently in September, when early analysis showed this year's Key Stage 2 gap was wider than in 2012, SIOs embarked on an in-depth analysis of the learning journeys of our PP children in Years 5, 6 and 7, with 17 primary schools in the borough with the widest gaps.

3.2 An initial analysis appears below which endeavours to suggest possible explanations and future predictions. Findings from the September data trawl show there is an improving picture, and the current Year 5 cohort in receipt of the PP should significantly close the gap.

3.3 As a result of the analysis in our 17 schools the following themes and issues emerge:

- There are approximately 100 PP pupils on average in each of our school cohorts. For instance, in the Year 2 cohort in 2012 – now pupils in Year 4 – this equates to 5.3% of the year-group
- Our PP pupils appear to score less than the national average of 100 on a standardised Non-Verbal Test, and this needs more extensive exploration.
- Early Years Foundation Stage average point scores for the cohorts analysed are markedly below the average for the Wokingham cohort as a whole. This may be as a result of three and two points of entry in years gone by, and also about the ways in which schools interpreted the assessment methodologies at the time. Nevertheless, research shows that by strengthening children's experiences in their earliest years – before and during their first years in Nursery School and Foundation Stage – attainment and achievement strengthen later on in the school system
- The current Year 7 is the weakest cohort under review, and failed to meet targets in reading and maths, but exceeded these in writing. This may have been as a result of the focus on writing achievements over the last few years
- The most promising cohort to close our gap is the current Year 5. This may be a result of an increased focus on these pupils' learning needs, and an increased focus on their agenda at the same time

- The least progress is made by PP pupils in mathematics during Lower Key Stage 2. Maths attainment is an issue for many of our pupils, not just PP pupils. Early evidence suggests this is as a result of planning that does not take account of individual pupil needs, and a lack of hands-on experiences with apparatus – a lack of ‘real’ opportunities in maths
- Progress is uneven across reading, writing and maths, in favour of reading. Indeed, what is striking is this lack of consistency across the three main assessed areas of reading, writing and maths with our PP children
- Over the three years PP pupils are making 6 points progress on average from the end of Year 2 to Year 4. This is strongest in reading, weakest in maths. 6 points’ progress is the expected attainment but does not lead to any value-added. 6 points’ progress is the national expectation for progress in these two years, and our PP pupils are matching this expectation, but not exceeding it
- Over the three school years under review, an average of 6.4 points’ progress needs to be made between the end of Year 4 and Year 6 to meet targets. This would mean progress over and above national expectations, and more than they were making in Years 3 and 4. Initial indications suggest our PP children make less progress in Years 5 and 6. This could be as a result of their wider awareness and understanding of their status
- Many of the pupils under review carry additional agendas. They may be known to additional agencies within and beyond Children’s Services; are in families where both natural parents are no longer resident together, or where a trauma has been endured
- A good proportion of these PP pupils did not begin their education in their current school

4. Effective Strategies Bid

Schools are using a wide range of strategies to support PP pupils with their grant funding. Set out below is a list of the main activities being undertaken to provide this support:

- The provision of specialist SEN strategies - Catch-up, Tracks and other recognised intervention programmes
- The provision of 1-1 tuition where appropriate
- The provision of specialist SATs revision packs in Year 6
- Access to a Homework Club
- Involvement in Focus Groups
- Involvement in “Bubble Time” and Nurture Groups
- Access to Booster Groups in Years 5 and 6
- Involvement in Precision Teaching and Over-learning techniques
- Provision of Emotional First Aid programmes
- Access to Extended Services activities, including both in school time and out of school activities to raise self-esteem and ease the financial and organisational burden on parents, many of whom are in single-parent scenarios
- Access to trained officers working for JAC
- Access to ARC counsellors
- Access to work with Foundry College staff
- Access to the Family Support Worker
- EWO support
- Provision of a laptop for home learning

- Financial support for foreign and domestic visits out of school
- Financial support to access breakfast and after-school provision
- Access to Art Therapy
- Involvement in a Kindle Group

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

There are no specific additional financial implications arising from this report.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Pupil premium funding is an increasing focus for Ofsted inspectors and the effective use of this money is a key determinant in making judgements about all our schools. If the LA is to endeavour to ensure that none of its schools is judged to be inadequate in any future inspections it is vital that there is not a further reduction in human resources working in partnership with schools

Cross-Council Implications

These issues are also reporting to the cross-council working group of members and officers who consider the broader implications of Narrowing The Gap for the council

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

N/A

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