Guidance for using the Pupil Deprivation Grant

What really works?

This guide is intended to give schools practical advice on how to use their Pupil Deprivation Grant to best effect. It supplements the guidance for practitioners that was published in December 2013 on the Pupil Deprivation Grant 2013–2015.

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

There is little doubt that a direct correlation exists between educational attainment and economic prosperity, and many children affected are simply not realising their full potential.

Currently around one in five primary school pupils are eligible for free school meals (FSM). At the end of Key Stage 2 less than 70% of these will achieve expected levels, compared to 88% of children from better off families. By age 16, children from better off families are more than twice as likely to achieve five good GCSEs, as those from disadvantaged homes.

This means that roughly one in five pupils are failing to get good results, not because of lack of ability, but because they are from a poor background. The Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) is an opportunity for schools to address these inequalities.

What is the Pupil Deprivation Grant?

The PDG is extra funding from the Welsh Government to overcome the additional barriers poorer pupils face that prevent them from achieving their full potential. This may include exceptionally able pupils who, because of their family background are not achieving their full personal potential, even though they appear to be holding their own in comparison with their peers.

How schools can make best use of the PDG

Some interventions are more successful than others, and the best approaches are not always the most expensive.

The Sutton Trust Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Toolkit[1] provides information on a variety of interventions which can be used to help disadvantaged children achieve their potential.

Its analysis and summary of extensive international research and evidence-based studies has concluded the most effective approaches include:

- specific feedback
- metacognition and self-regulation
- peer tuition.

Individually, or as a combination, these methods can cost less than £170 per pupil per year.

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Top 10 Strategies for tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools

1 Taking a whole-school, strategic approach to tackling disadvantage

2 Using data to track the progress of disadvantaged pupils

3 Improving disadvantaged pupils' literacy and learning skills

4 Improving the social and emotional skills of disadvantaged pupils

5 Improving the attendance, punctuality and behaviour of disadvantaged pupils

6 Tailoring the curriculum to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils

7 Providing enriched experiences and a variety of extra-curricular activities and trips

8 Listening to pupils and encouraging participation

9 Engaging with parents and carers of disadvantaged pupils

10 Developing the expertise of staff to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils

The Learning Wales website hosts links to the Sutton Trust toolkit under the Poverty Improvement area[3]. Here you can also find case studies, research and reports and useful resources.

Some approaches are not as effective you might think, but there are ways of improving these. In particular, it seems obvious that employing classroom assistants will add value to what is delivered in the classroom. In fact this is not necessarily the case. Research[4] has shown that the more support a pupil received from a teaching assistant, the less progress the child made. This is because, while the teacher leads the whole class, classroom assistants typically spend one-to-one time with those with additional support needs. In other words, those children with the greatest needs spend the most time with the least qualified adult in the classroom.

The Pupil Deprivation Grant can, however be used to fund strategies that increase the impact of teaching assistants. This includes training teachers to work with teaching assistants, and training teaching assistants on assessment for learning, or for targeted interventions such as key vocabulary which will enable pupils to benefit from whole class teaching.

1. http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/sutton-trust-education-endowment-foundation/?lang=en
2. http://www.estyn.gov.uk/download/publication/259977.9/effective-practice-in-tackling-poverty-and-disadvantage-in-schools-november-2012/
3. http://learning.wales.gov.uk/improvementareas/poverty/?lang=en#/improvementareas/poverty/?lang=en
4. Reassessing the Impact of Teaching Assistants, Routledge, 2010

Making PDG plans now

The PDG is a time-limited grant, so schools should be planning how to make their interventions sustainable. This should include staff development, working with parents/carers, whole school strategies, such as developing effective data tracking systems, and the use of catch up programmes.[5]

How will schools be held accountable?

School Development Plans (SDP) are where schools will need to demonstrate their priorities and targets; how they identify pupils' needs and what staff development will be put in place to meet those needs. The rationale for how PDG funding is used should be captured in the SDP[6]. The regional education consortia will assess how effective schools' planning is.

From September 2014, Estyn inspectors will also be considering how pupils eligible for free school meals are supported to improve their rates of attainment and how effectively resources, such as the PDG are used.

Where to find information on what works

- The Sutton Trust - Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Toolkit
- Estyn - Effective Practice in Tackling Poverty and Disadvantage in Schools
- The Learning Wales website Poverty Improvement area

PDG pupils: identifying them and helping them

Research helps identify the characteristics of children eligible for the Pupil Deprivation Grant as well as areas in which the funding could be used to the best advantage.

When compared to their peers, on average, disadvantaged pupils:

- receive little or no home support for their learning[7]
- tend to have weaker language and communication skills[8]
- are more likely to have significant difficulties in basic literacy and numeracy skills[9]
- experience frequent behavioural difficulties[10]
- are less likely to believe that they have any control over events that affect them[11].

The fact is that more than one on four of these children believes that 'people like them don't succeed in life'[12].

Children like Cai…

Cai's story

Cai is eight. He talks very little, and when he does it is with a very limited vocabulary. His parents/carers don't work, in fact no-one in his extended family does. There are no books in his house and he hardly ever gets the opportunity to go outside of the estate where he lives.

He began school life as a happy child, but as his friends' skills developed, Cai's did not. The more he struggled the more isolated he became and the more his frustrations manifested in bad behaviour.

At the age of just seven, Cai had virtually written himself off, believing that education was to be endured and not enjoyed. His mum, dad and granddad had felt just the same and the next generation of failure was underway.

What can schools do to help children like Cai?

PDG can allocate resources to children like Cai to help with the important skills in life; the ability to read, write and communicate, alongside being able to complete basic maths.

Long term effective use of the PDG can actually help them succeed against overwhelming odds. Research has shown that effective primary schools can enable disadvantaged children to succeed "helping them to catch-up, re-establishing and reinforcing a positive perception of school and learning and improved self-efficacy".[13]

Interventions in the lives of children like Cai are vital, and it is these interventions that PDG can pay for.

Languages, literacy and numeracy

Strong personal and social skills

Parental support

5. learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/catchupguidance/?lang=en
6. Mitigating the impact of poverty has to go beyond making decisions about how a school will use the grant itself. In order to make a difference, tackling the impact of poverty has to be central to whole-school planning . . . Although most schools provide staff with extensive training on teaching literacy to all pupils, . . . very few plan training on how to alleviate the effects of poverty on individual pupils for whom disadvantage creates barriers to learning. The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, 2012-2013
7. Poorer Children's Educational Attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviours? Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2010
8. Low Income and Early Cognitive Development in the UK. Sutton Trust 2010
9. The long term costs of literacy difficulties and The Long term cost of numeracy difficulties, Every Child A Chance Trust, 2009
10. Breaking the link between Disadvantage and low attainment DCSF, 2009
11. Tackling Low Educational achievement, Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2007
12. 7 Key Truths about Social Mobility. The interim report of the all-parliamentary group on social mobility, May 2012
13. Performing Against the Odds: developmental trajectories of children in the EPPSE 3-16 Study, DfE 2011

What will work for schools?

There is plenty of evidence of what works available on the Learning Wales Website, but it must be remembered that what works well for one school may not be so effective in another where the circumstances are different. This is why it is essential to have an effective School Development Plan which reflects the development needs of staff. The Sutton Trust Toolkit is a reliable and up-to-date source of information on interventions to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Practitioners are advised to access the Toolkit and to select from it what is best for their school.

The Toolkit also lists approaches which have worked well as well as those that are least likely to be effective.

What hasn't been successful:
- Employing additional teaching assistants (except where teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together)
- Ability grouping
- Reducing primary school class sizes (aside from reception and Y1 when reduced to below 15)
- Teacher performance-related pay.

But a lot of things have worked well…

1. **Effective feedback on learning.**
   Feedback for pupils and teachers on performance relative to learning goals can be very effective in raising attainment if it is about challenging tasks or goals, focuses more on what is right than what is wrong, and encourages the learner rather than threatens their self esteem.

2. **Metacognition and self-regulation**
   Teaching children strategies to motivate themselves and plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning, is a well-proven, high-impact approach. The Learning Wales website has resources for schools on using metacognition[14]

3. **Peer tutoring**
   In these approaches, pupils work in pairs or small groups to provide each other with explicit teaching support. The boost to attainment provided by peer tutoring is apparent for both tutor and tutee, particularly in cross-age tutoring

4. **Early intervention**
   Research shows that high-quality early years provision, with a strong educational focus and activities which support early reading and number concepts, is beneficial for disadvantaged children.

These are the top four of the findings on the Sutton Trust website, the first three of these approaches are low cost and relatively easy to implement. The Welsh Government recognises the importance of early interventions and information on how we propose to implement this across Wales can be found in Building a Brighter Future: The Early Years and Childcare Plan[15]

In total, the EEF Sutton Trust Toolkit contains information about 33 different interventions and evaluates how effective they are in increasing learner achievement against how much they cost to implement. To help schools to understand the effectiveness of interventions in their schools, the Toolkit also provides a useful DIY Evaluation Guide[16]

Oxford University Press[17] suggest the following ways of improving the impact of teaching assistants:

- evaluate the impact of teaching assistants (TAs) and track outcomes for pupils supported by the Pupil Deprivation Grant
- use TAs for specific interventions and pre-teaching such as key vocabulary, to enable pupils to engage more effectively with whole class-class teaching
- support joint training for teachers and TAs and allow time for joint planning, monitoring and evaluation of interventions
- support continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers on working with TAs
- support CPD for TAs on assessment for learning, and use of questioning to support pupils to become independent pupils.

A shining example

In Mount Stuart Primary School in Cardiff, 31% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 89% of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are excellent features in leadership and provision in the school, which result in outstanding outcomes for pupils. Staff monitor teaching and learning systematically to provide a sound platform on which to plan delivery in responsive and imaginative ways. There are outstanding collaborative working arrangements between the school, the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service and other organisations, which ensure that pupils from groups in danger of under-achieving make at least good, and often excellent progress, especially in their oracy and writing skills. School staff work alongside staff from outside agencies so that they can learn from specialist workers how to continue the specialist programmes with the pupil between visits from outside agencies. The school also works exceptionally well with parents/carers and the local community. There is a very effective partnership with a local business, whose employees read with pupils each week. Innovative family literacy sessions and open mornings promote close relationships and enable parents/carers to support their children at home. These well-managed partnerships have a positive impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

The Annual Report of HM Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales, 2012-2013.

Schools like Mount Stuart take a whole-school approach to tackling disadvantage and have strong and consistent leadership on that approach. The head teachers make sure that they develop the expertise of staff, strengthen links with the community and engage parental support for learning.

In addition to the general features of supportive schools, they have:

- out-of-school-hours learning
- nurture groups for pupils, some of which include parents/carers
- family learning opportunities
- parenting programmes
- on-site multi-agency support
- strong links with the local community and opportunities for community-participation
- the commitment of local employers.

14. http://learning.wales.gov.uk/learningpacks/pisa/introduction-to-metacognition/?lang=en
15. http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/building-a-brighterfuture/lang=en
16. http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evaluation/diy-evaluation-guide/
17. *The Pupil Premium: Making it work in your school, Oxford University Press, 2012*

Steps to success – action points

1 Collate existing data on e-FSM pupils; their speaking and listening levels, literacy and maths achievements, absence and exclusions, personal and social development and level of parental engagement to assist in planning and targeting interventions. Use the data to track whether the interventions are actually making quantifiable progress.

2 Refer to the Learning Wales website and the Sutton Trust Toolkit for ideas on which interventions to use and to design your evaluation tools.

3 Evaluate existing data collection processes to ensure information is accurate and that the approach is consistent across the whole school, allowing comparisons to be made between groups, classes, year groups and key stages.

4 Use your data to evaluate existing provision and check whether the perceived impact measures up to quantifiable progress.

5 Consider working with other schools to compare results and track pupil progress – perhaps resources could be shared to address issues in your catchment area, eg joint CPD.

6 Involve and inform pupils, staff and parents/carers in your strategies to raise achievement levels.

7 Develop a plan to engage with parents/carers. Guidance on this will be published by DfES in 2014.

8 Ensure governors are aware of the priorities you have identified.

9 Consider whether your whole-school approach is designed to ensure the highest quality day-to-day teaching for all pupils. Make sure you are doing all you can to prevent attainment gaps and enable children to keep up before any such gaps develop.

10 Evaluate whether you are identifying children who need additional help from the outset, and continue to receive support for as long as they need it.

11 Is your approach to PSE effective for all pupils? Do you need to provide small group/individual support for children with the greatest needs in this area?

12 Evaluate the intervention support in literacy and numeracy you have in place – is there robust evidence that it will work?

13 Ensure that staff supporting children with the greatest difficulties in learning are well trained and that the impact of their interventions is monitored and evaluated.

14 Consider using PDG to fund training for teaching assistants in specific intervention programmes.

15 Use PDG to fund joint training for teachers/teaching assistants on working together.

16 Use classroom observations to explore whether listening and collaborative skills are actively taught. Consider using appropriate "whole-class thinking together"[18] programmes.

17 Consider whether there are pupils eligible for free school meals who would benefit from small-group interventions.

Resources

Estyn Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools (November 2012)

Estyn Working together to tackle the impact of poverty on educational attainment (November 2013)

The EEF Sutton Trust Toolkit

School Effectiveness Grant and Pupil Deprivation Grant 2013 - 2015

www.learning.wales.gov.uk

http://www.teachingassistantresearch.co.uk/home/4581699947

18. https://thinkingtogether.educ.cam.ac.uk/about/ http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/how-to-develop-thinking-and-assessment/?lang=en