Evaluation of the Attainment Scotland Fund: Headteacher Survey 2018

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

social research

Attainment Scotland Fund Evaluation: Headteacher Survey 2018

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1. Introduction

1.1. This report presents findings from a recent survey of headteachers of schools in receipt of support from the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF). The survey was commissioned by Scottish Government's Learning Analysis Unit to inform the wider evaluation of ASF.

1.2. This section summarises the background and objectives for the survey. The remainder of this report sets out the fieldwork approach, level and profile of survey response, and findings across the key themes addressed through the survey:

- Views on the Attainment Scotland Fund;
- Funded interventions and approaches;
- Use of data and evaluation;
- Impact and sustainability;
- Governance and administration; and
- Pupil Equity Funding.

Background

1.3. The Attainment Scotland Fund was established to support the Scottish Attainment Challenge in 2015. The Scottish Attainment Challenge prioritises improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing of children adversely affected by the poverty-related attainment gap in Scotland's primary and secondary schools. This built on a range of existing initiatives and programmes focused on raising attainment and reducing inequity for children in Scotland, and aimed to support schools, local authorities and partners to develop and deliver approaches tailored to their own circumstances.

1.4. The Attainment Scotland Fund consists of several strands of ASF funding including the Challenge Authorities and Schools' Programmes, Pupil Equity Funding, as well as a number of National Programmes. This funding is distributed in a number of different ways: via local authorities, directly to schools and directly to national organisations. In 2017/18 the three main strands of the Scottish Attainment Challenge supported by the ASF were:

- **Challenge Authorities Programme**. Provides targeted funding to the 9 local authorities with the highest concentration of pupils living in SIMD 1 and 2 areas. The local authorities develop strategic plans to drive forward

improvements in their primary and secondary schools. Funding is provided via local authorities.

- **Schools Programme**. Funding to individual schools outwith challenge authorities, where 70% or more pupils live in SIMD 1 and 2 areas. Currently 74 schools across Scotland, with funding provided via local authorities.

- **Pupil Equity Funding**. Provides additional funding to schools on the basis of the number of primary 1 to S3 pupils eligible for free school meals – reaching 95% of schools across Scotland in 2017/18. Funding is provided via grant funding to local authorities.

1.5. These strands have developed over the period of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, with the Pupil Equity Funding being the most recent addition (in 2017/18). An interim evaluation of the first two years of the Scottish Attainment Challenge was published in 2018; drawing on, amongst other evidence sources, surveys of headteachers across Challenge Authorities and Schools Programmes undertaken in 2016 and 2017.

1.6. The figure below summarises development of the ASF, and surveys of headteachers conducted to date.

Attainment Scotland Fund timeline

2015/16	**2016/17**	**2017/18**	**2018/19**
7 Challenge Authorities 57 Schools Programme (primary only)	CA and SP extended to include secondary schools - 9 Challenge Authority, 74 Schools Programme	Continuation of CA/SP, introduction of Pupil Equity Funding (claimed by 95% of schools)	Continuation of all 3 ASF streams
	2016 survey Focus on 2015/16, CA and SP schools	**2017 survey** Focus on 2016/17, CA and SP schools	**Present survey** CA and SP schools, inc PEF only schools for first time

Study objectives

1.7.   Scottish Government commissioned the survey to include headteachers of schools in receipt of Challenge Authority, Schools Programme and/or Pupil Equity Funding. The overall aim is to build on learning from previous surveys to further improve operation of the ASF, and to maximise the impact of programmes supported by the Fund. This includes the following specific objectives:

- Provide insight on the experience of headteachers benefiting through each of the ASF streams, identifying any variation in experience or views across schools;

- Build on longitudinal data to monitor changes over time; and

- Provide evidence of what is working and what is not working well to inform ongoing delivery of the ASF.

2. Methodology

2.1. This section summarises the survey fieldwork approach, and the level and profile of response.

Survey design and fieldwork

2.2. Survey content was adapted from previous exercises to maintain longitudinal data, and was adapted to ensure relevance to the experience of schools in receipt of Pupil Equity Funding only, included in the survey for the first time in 2018.

2.3. The survey sample comprised 100% of schools in receipt of Challenge Authority and Schools Programme funding, and a sample of schools in receipt of PEF-only stratified by urban/rural geography and the level of PEF allocation. The survey sample is summarised below

Survey sample structure

	Challenge Authority	Schools Programme	PEF-only	All
Urban area	550	57	300	**907 (47%)**
Small town	60	9	102	**171 (16%)**
Rural area	64	8	239	**311 (37%)**
Total	**674 (49%)**	**74 (5%)**	**641 (46%)**	**1,389**

2.4. The survey was issued direct to schools by email in October 2018, supported by promotion via Education Scotland and local authorities. The fieldwork period was maximised to enable the broadest possible response, running for 9 weeks to early December 2018.

2.5. The survey response and approach to survey weighting is summarised over the following pages, with further detail provided in an associated Technical Report.
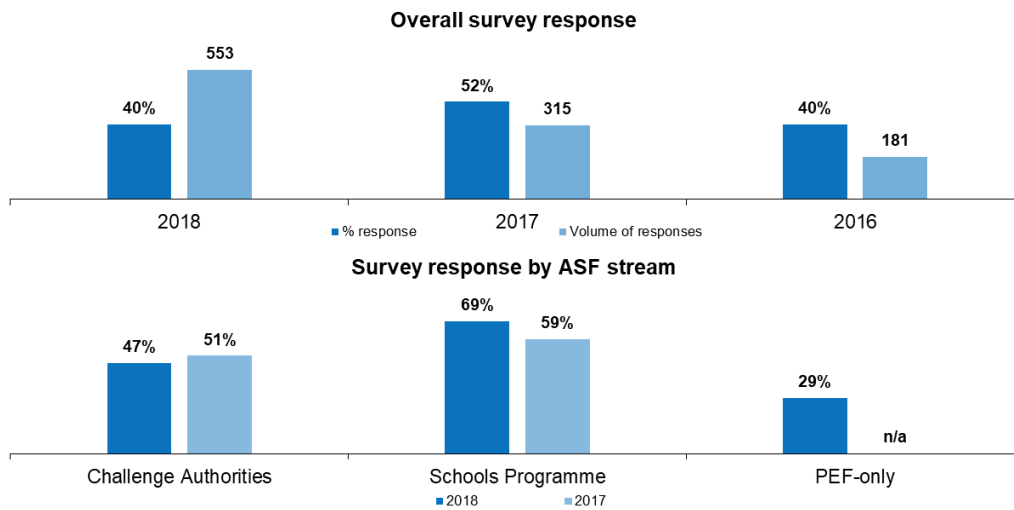
Survey response

2.6. A total of 553 responses were received by survey close, equivalent to an overall response rate of 40% and comparing with 52% in 2017. The lower overall response is due to a lower 29% response from 'PEF-only' schools included in the survey for the first time this

year; the 47% response rate for Challenge Authority schools is similar to that achieved in 2017, and the 69% Schools Programme response is 10 points higher than 2017.
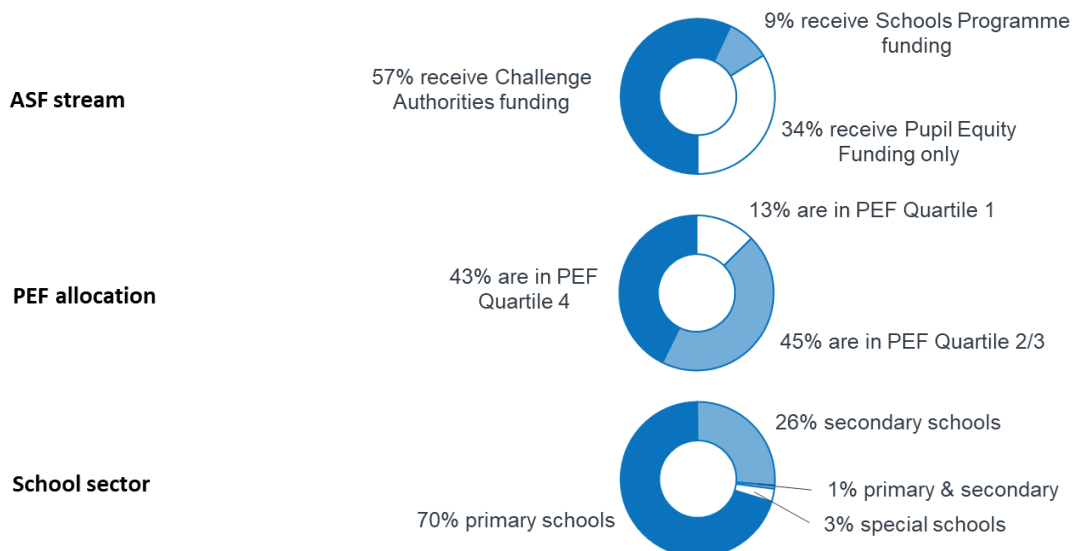
2.7. It should also be noted that the larger survey sample in 2018 means that the volume of responses is significantly larger than that achieved by previous surveys; 553 compare to 315 responses in 2017. The larger volume of responses has enabled more detailed analysis to identify variation in views and experiences across key respondent groups.
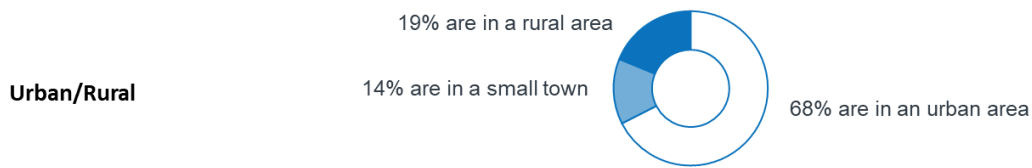
Survey response 2016 to 2018

Overall survey response

Survey response by ASF stream

2.8. The profile of survey respondents is summarised below. The largest groups are Challenge Authority schools, schools with a higher PEF allocation, primary schools and schools in urban areas. The lower response received from PEF-only schools has resulted in some under-representation of this group – survey weighting has been used to correct for this response bias.

Profile of survey respondents (n=553)

6

Urban/Rural

19% are in a rural area

14% are in a small town

68% are in an urban area

Note: Quartile 1 = lower PEF allocation, Quartile 4 = higher allocation.

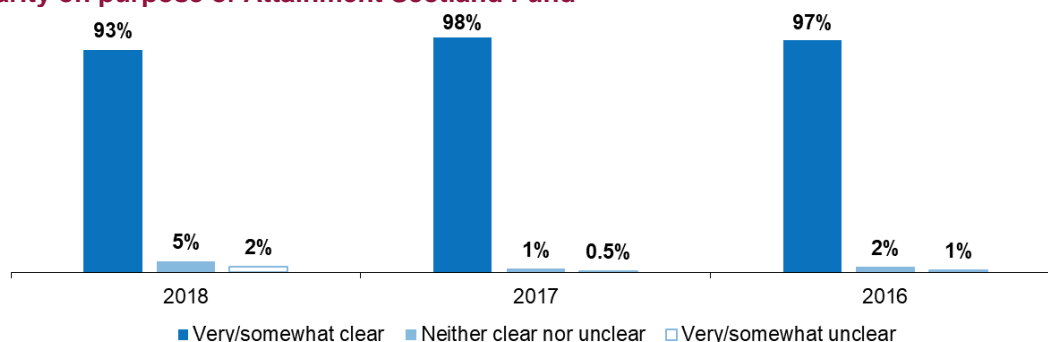## Analysis and reporting

2.9.   Survey data show some inconsistency between responses and data on ASF support provided to schools. For example, 84 Challenge Authority and 2 Schools Programme respondents indicated their school received only Pupil Equity Funding, suggesting some lack of clarity on funding streams. The final categorisation of respondents has sought to correct these inconsistencies.

2.10. Survey responses have been weighted by ASF stream and urban/rural location. This adjusts for response bias and to account for the over-sampling of Challenge Authority and Schools Programme funding streams in the original survey sample. Results presented in the remainder of this report are based on respondents to each question – i.e. they exclude non-respondents to individual questions unless we state otherwise.

2.11. Survey analysis has used 95% Confidence Interval tests to identify significant differences from previous survey findings, and across key respondent groups. These include ASF stream, PEF allocation, school sector and urban/rural location. Where variation across these groups is noted in the body of the report, this is based on a statistically significant difference between groups.

2.12. A full list of survey questions and tabular survey results are provided in an associated Technical Report.

3. Views on the Fund

3.1.   This section sets out findings in relation to headteachers' understanding of the purpose of the Attainment Scotland Fund, and the extent to which headteachers agree with the Fund's stated purpose.

3.2.   A great majority of headteachers feel they are clear on the purpose of the Fund; 93% are very or somewhat clear. This is somewhat lower than that reported in previous surveys, and appears to reflect a less positive response from the PEF-only schools included in the survey for the first time; 91% are clear on the purpose of the Fund compared to 97% of Challenge Authority and Schools Programme respondents.

Clarity on purpose of Attainment Scotland Fund

Legend: ■ Very/somewhat clear   ■ Neither clear nor unclear   □ Very/somewhat unclear

3.3.   The survey also asked headteachers to describe the aims of ASF in their own words. Around half of respondents provided an answer here – common themes across these responses are summarised below.
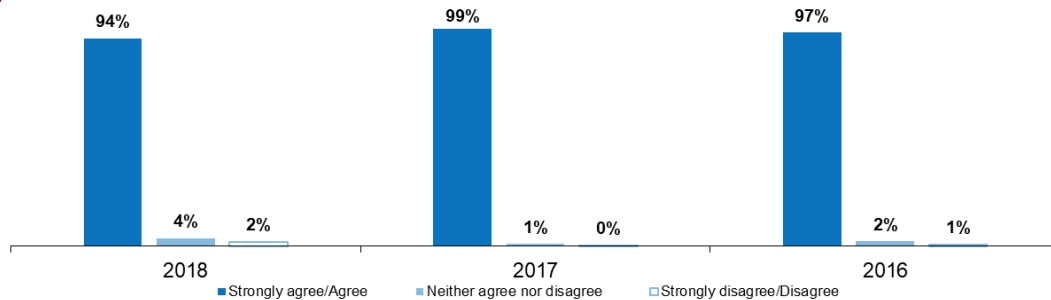
Reference to 'closing the gap'	83%[1]
Reference to poverty and deprivation	67%
Reference to targeting of pupils/parents/schools	27%
Specific reference to targeting deprivation	24%
Raising attainment	23%
Reference to literacy	14%
Reference to numeracy	14%
Reference to health and wellbeing	13%
Reference to raising quality and standards	4%

N=282

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[1] Percentage results are based on those answering the question.

3.4.   A great majority agree with the aims of the Fund (94%). As is noted above in relation to clarity on the aims of the Fund, this is a somewhat less positive result than previous surveys (99% in 2017). These views are consistent across funding streams and other key respondent groups, although it is notable that those who are clear on the aims of the Fund are more likely than others to agree with these aims.

Agreement with aim of Attainment Scotland Fund

	2018	2017	2016
Strongly agree/Agree	94%	99%	97%
Neither agree nor disagree	4%	1%	2%
Strongly disagree/Disagree	2%	0%	1%

3.5.   A small number of respondents (2% of all survey respondents) who do not agree with the aims of the Fund provided further detail on the reasons for this. These respondents indicated that, while they agreed with the principle of ASF, they disagreed with aspects of how the aims of the Fund are framed and how funding is allocated. This included concern that: the Fund is based on a narrow definition of poverty; that the focus on numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing is too narrow; that the focus should be at pre-school stages; that basing allocation on take-up of (rather than entitlement to) free school meals disadvantages schools where local factors contribute to low take-up rates; and that individual funding to schools can only have limited impact in the context of broader reductions in education funding.

4. Interventions and approaches

4.1. This section summarises survey findings on the interventions and approaches funded by the ASF. This includes an overview of the range of interventions used, schools' approach to planning, and how schools have targeted interventions.

Overview of funded interventions and approaches

4.2. Almost all survey respondents had interventions or approaches being supported by Challenge Authority, Schools Programme and/or PEF funding during 2017/18; 97% of all respondents indicate this (99% of those answering the question[2]). This finding is similar to previous surveys.

4.3. The survey asked respondents to list the ASF-supported interventions and approaches for their school during 2017/18. More than 250 schools provided details of their interventions and approaches, equivalent to 50% of those who indicated their school had interventions supported by the Fund in 2017/18.

4.4. Almost all of these schools referred to interventions and approaches across multiple curricular areas, the most common being those with a literacy focus (95% of those describing interventions). A large majority also referred to interventions with a numeracy and/or health and wellbeing focus (88% and 90% respectively). Over the page we provide a brief overview of interventions mentioned by respondents.

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[2] The very small number of schools who did not report ASF supported interventions referred to a range of reasons for this. These included a newly opened school, new headteachers, a school in the process of developing a plan for funded interventions, and a school receiving insufficient funding to support specific interventions.

Numeracy approaches	**Mentioned by 88% of respondents**
	Funding additional staffing or staff time (mentioned by around 1 in 4 respondents). Also reference to a focus on developing practice and pedagogy around numeracy through dedicated CPD, purchase of resources and digital learning, leadership development, parental/family engagement, collaboration within and between schools, and reference to a broad range of specific programmes and initiatives such as being SEAL, Sumdog, Number Talks and Number Box.
Literacy approaches	**Mentioned by 95% of respondents**
	Funding additional staffing or staff time (mentioned by around 1 in 6 respondents). Also reference to developing practice through dedicated CPD, leadership development including Challenge Leaders of Learning, speech and language-focused interventions, purchase of resources, collaboration within school particularly to support CPD, parental engagement, and reference to specific programmes and initiatives including Reading Wise, Literacy for All, Rainbow Reading, Active Literacy and Read Write approaches.
Health/wellbeing approaches	**Mentioned by 90% of respondents**
	Respondents are less likely to refer to having funded additional staffing or staff time (around 1 in 10). Most responses refer to specific approaches or initiatives, and the staff training and engagement with external agencies to support these. This includes reference to nurture-based approaches, outdoor learning, play-based approaches, counselling and therapist services, and family support and engagement.
Other approaches	**Mentioned by 62% of respondents**
	Respondents referred to a broad range of other approaches and interventions, including a mix of specific initiatives and wider approaches or principles that apply across specific programmes. This was most commonly with reference to developing pedagogical approaches across the curriculum such as through visible learning or outdoor learning, family learning and engagement, whole-school approaches to encourage collaboration and sharing of practice, support for pupils with ASN, development of the learning environment including creation of new resources within schools, and developing use of data and evidence.

Planning

4.5.   In terms of the planning of funded interventions and approaches, the survey gathered information on the extent to which interventions had been newly introduced or built on existing work, whether schools had stopped or were planning to stop any funded

interventions, and schools' approach to planning where they receive multiple ASF streams.

4.6. More than half (56%) of schools indicate that most of their funded interventions were newly introduced during 2017/18. This is a 12 point increase on 2017, reflecting the inclusion of PEF-only schools in the present survey; 61% of respondents in receipt of PEF-only indicated that most interventions were newly introduced during 2017/18. In contrast, less than half of Challenge Authority (47%) and less than a third of Schools Programme (30%) schools indicated that most of their funded interventions were newly introduced in 2017/18.

4.7. Most schools in receipt of multiple ASF funding streams (i.e. PEF alongside Challenge Authority or Schools Programme funding) have a single school plan integrating approaches across funding streams. Around 3 in 5 (61%) indicate this, compared to 35% who had separate school plans for each funding stream. Challenge Authority schools who also receive PEF are more likely to have developed a single school plan; 64% compared to 34% of those in receipt of Schools Programme and PEF.

4.8. Around 1 in 10 (11%) of survey respondents indicated they had stopped or were planning to stop Challenge Authority or Schools Programme funded interventions, and 1 in 5 (20%) had stopped or were planning to stop PEF-funded interventions. Survey results indicate that Schools Programme schools are more likely to have stopped or expect to stop funded interventions; more than 1 in 4 have stopped Schools Programme funded interventions, compared to less than 1 in 10 stopping Challenge Authority funded interventions.

4.9. Written responses refer to a range of factors having influenced schools stopping or planning to stop ASF supported interventions. These are summarised below.
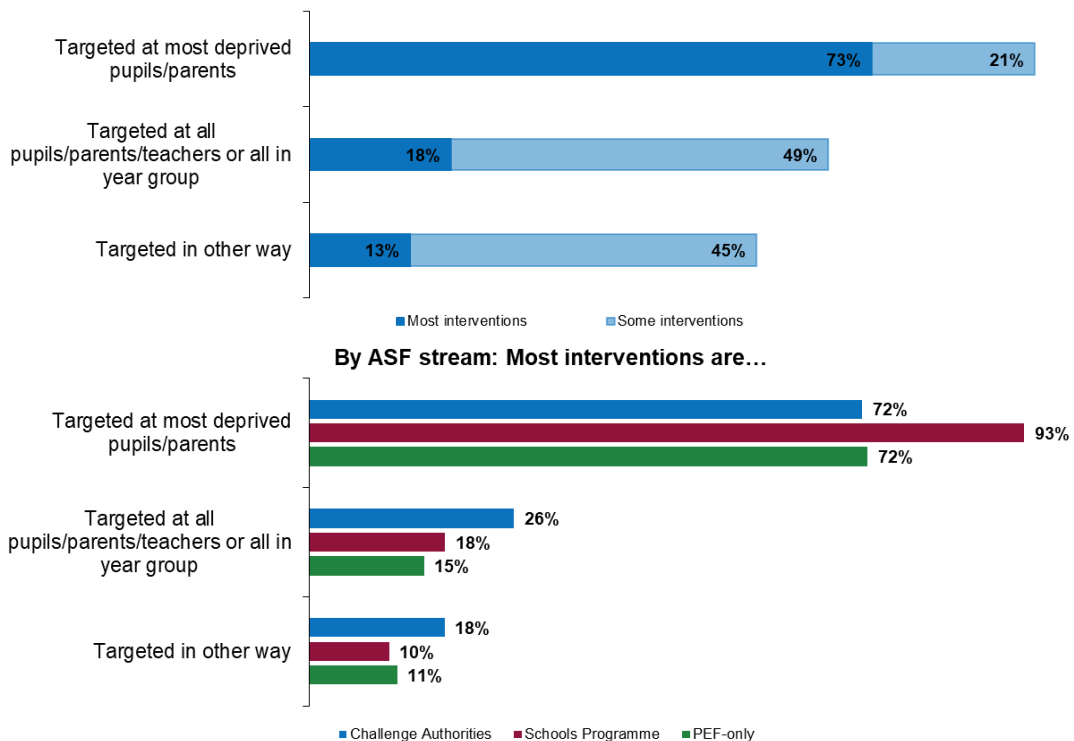
Lack of impact, including assessment of impact against cost	47%[3]
Reduction in funding or resourcing (inc staffing limitations and reduced PEF allocation)	23%
Change of focus over time (e.g. between literacy, numeracy and health/wellbeing)	8%
Consultation/feedback from pupils, parents or teachers	7%
Change of local authority strategy or priorities	3%

N=88

[3] Percentage results are based on those answering the question.

Targeting

4.10. Survey responses indicate that most funded interventions are targeted specifically at the most deprived pupils and/or their parents. Around three quarters (73%) of schools indicate that most of their funded interventions are targeted in this way. Relatively few schools indicate that most of their interventions are targeted at all pupils, although most have at least some interventions with this broad focus. The survey indicates targeting of interventions varies somewhat across funding streams, most notably with Schools Programme respondents being more likely than others to specifically target the most deprived pupils and parents.

Targeting of funded interventions and approaches: pupils and parents

By ASF stream: Most interventions are…

4.11. More than half of respondents (58%) have some or most interventions targeted in other ways. This includes respondents noting that SIMD targeting includes all or nearly all pupils, such that additional criteria have been used to prioritise resourcing. Others suggest that geographically-based SIMD measures do not capture the full range of disadvantaged pupils in their school, and highlight the role of local knowledge in targeting. For those using other criteria to inform targeting, these are summarised below.

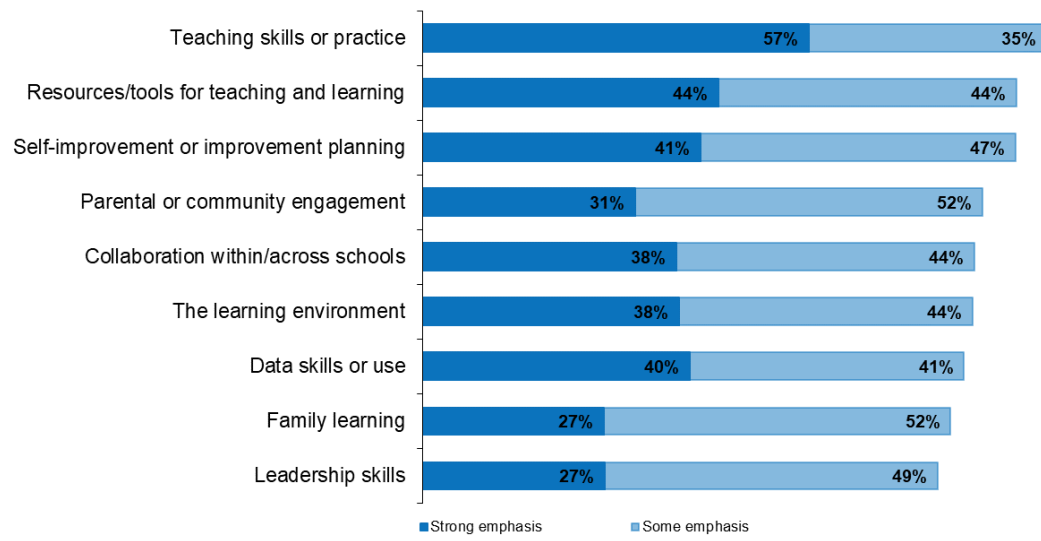|	
Additional Support Needs	18%[4]
Attendance, engagement and risk of exclusion	17%
Attainment	12%
Looked after, care experienced pupils	12%
Adverse childhood experiences	8%
Pupils with English as an additional language	8%
A lack of family engagement	8%

N=153

4.12. The survey also asked about the focus of interventions in terms of the skills and capabilities they are seeking to improve. The survey provided a list of potential areas of focus, and these are summarised over the page.

4.13. Responses indicate that schools have a relatively broad focus, with the great majority referring to multiple skills/capabilities. Teaching skills and practice are the most common focus. More than half (57%) of schools report interventions with a strong emphasis on these areas, and more than 9 in 10 have interventions with at least some emphasis on teaching skills and practice. Other common areas of focus include teaching and learning resources, self-improvement and improvement planning, parental or community engagement, collaboration between staff and schools, the learning environment, and data skills and use.

4.14. A small number of respondents (around 1 in 20) mentioned targeting other skills and capabilities. These schools referred to interventions targeting a range of areas including attendance and disengaged pupils, school ethos and sense of community, partnership working, mental and physical health, digital literacy, assessment and communication.

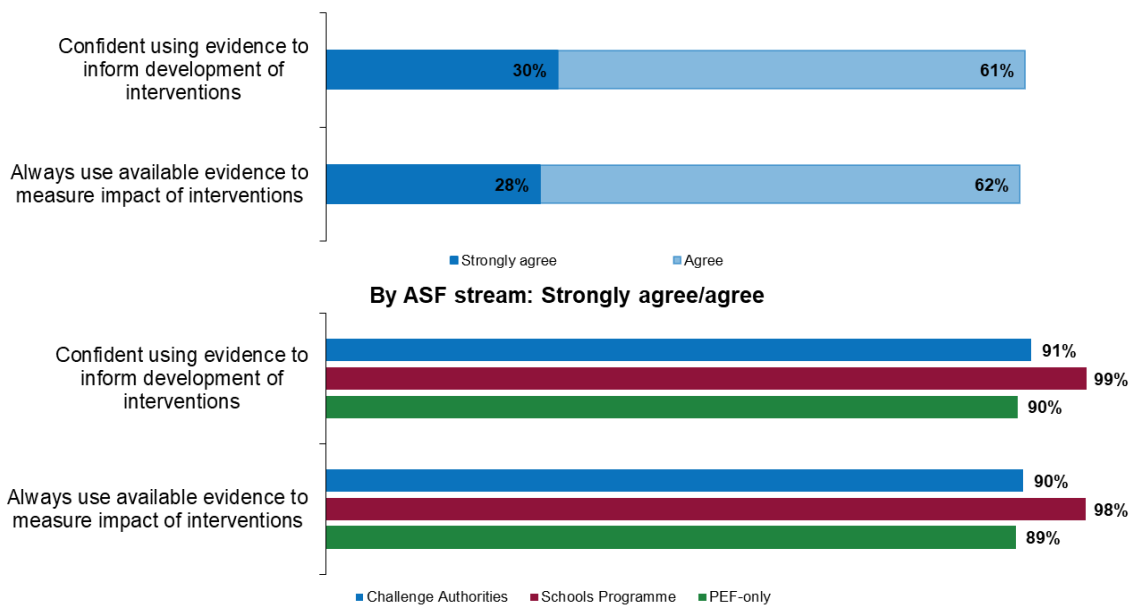[4] Percentage results are based on those answering the question.

Targeting of funded interventions and approaches: skills & capabilities

	Strong emphasis	Some emphasis
Teaching skills or practice	57%	35%
Resources/tools for teaching and learning	44%	44%
Self-improvement or improvement planning	41%	47%
Parental or community engagement	31%	52%
Collaboration within/across schools	38%	44%
The learning environment	38%	44%
Data skills or use	40%	41%
Family learning	27%	52%
Leadership skills	27%	49%

■ Strong emphasis ■ Some emphasis

5. Use of data and evaluation

5.1. This section summarises survey findings on schools' use of data and evaluation in relation to ASF supported interventions and approaches. In this context the survey asked about the extent to which headteachers feel confident using data in this way, the extent to which receipt of ASF support has impacted on their skills, and approaches to evaluating impact.

5.2. The great majority of headteachers feel confident using data and evidence to inform development of their interventions; around 9 in 10 indicate this (91%) and only 2% disagree. Similarly, a large majority (90%) indicate they always use evidence to measure the impact of interventions. It is notable that Schools Programme respondents are more positive than others across both measures.
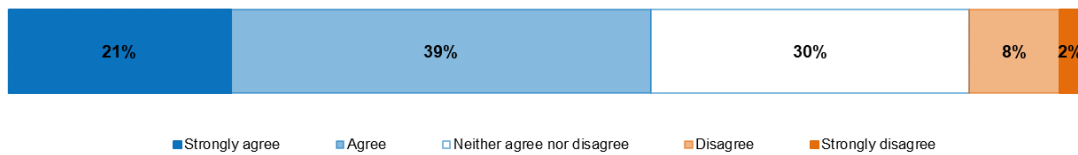
Using data to develop interventions and measure impact

5.3. Most respondents feel that their skills and knowledge in using data for planning, evaluation and improvement has significantly improved through the Fund. Around 3 in 5 (60%) respondents indicate this, and only 1 in 10 disagree. As is noted above in relation to headteachers' confidence in using evidence, Schools Programme respondents are typically more positive than others on the extent to which their skills and knowledge have improved.

Impact of Fund on ability to use data for planning, evaluation and improvement

"Through the fund, I feel that my skills/knowledge in using data for planning, evaluation and improvement at a school level have been significantly improved"

21%	39%	30%	8%	2%

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

By ASF stream: Strongly agree/agree

Challenge Authorities	74%
Schools Programme	90%
PEF-only	52%

5.4. A great majority of schools (92%) have an evaluation plan in place to measure the impact of ASF-supported interventions and approaches. This finding is consistent across key respondent groups.

5.5. For schools in receipt of PEF and Challenge Authority or Schools Programme funding, most have a single evaluation plan to measure progress irrespective of funding stream. More than 2 in 3 (69%) indicate this, with around 1 in 4 (24%) using separate evaluation plans for each funding stream. This finding is also consistent across key respondent groups.
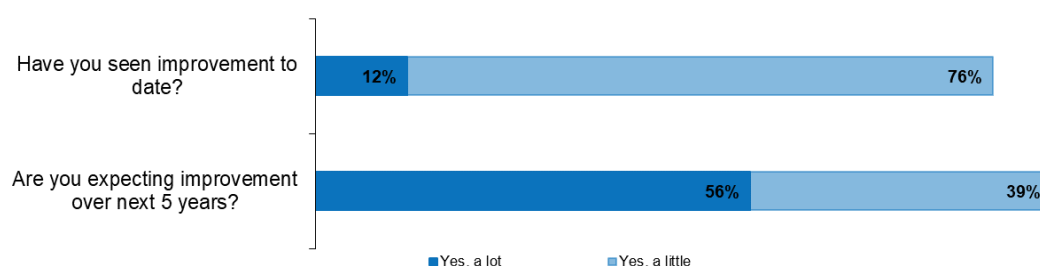
6.   Impact and sustainability

6.1.   This section sets out findings on views and experiences on the impact of funded interventions. This includes views on the factors that contribute to or hinder success, whether positive impacts are likely to be sustainable, the extent to which ASF support has contributed to an increase in collaborative working, and whether schools have seen any unintended positive or negative consequences of ASF support.
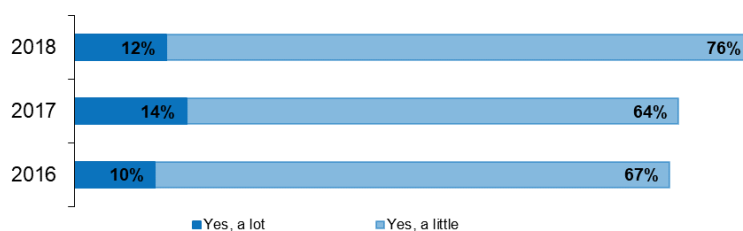
Impact of interventions

6.2.   Nearly 9 in 10 (88%) schools have seen an improvement in closing the poverty-related gap in attainment and/or health and wellbeing as a result of ASF supported interventions. A minority of these (12%) have seen 'a lot' of improvement to date, although more than half (56%) of respondents are *expecting* to see a lot of improvement over the next five years as a result of ASF supported interventions (see figure below). Survey responses indicate that those who have seen some improvement to date are significantly more likely to expect further improvement over the next five years.

6.3.   There has been a 10 point increase from the 2017 survey in the proportion of schools seeing an improvement in closing the gap. The survey also shows some variation in views across funding streams, with Schools Programme respondents most likely and PEF-only least likely to have seen an improvement. This difference may reflect that PEF-only schools did not have access to ASF support prior to 2017/18.

Perceived improvement in closing the poverty-related gap in attainment or health/wellbeing

Time series: Have you seen improvement to date?

6.4. More detailed survey analysis has been undertaken to assess the strength of correlation between perceived improvements in wellbeing/attainment, and a range of other factors and respondent groups. This indicates that the following groups are significantly more likely to have seen improvement as a result of ASF support interventions: those who feel confident using evidence to inform development of interventions; those who feel they had sufficient support available to develop their school plan; those who have an evaluation plan in place; and those who have seen an increase in collaborative working.

6.5. The survey also asked for headteachers' views on the factors that contribute to or hinder the success of ASF supported interventions. The factors most commonly raised by respondents are summarised below.

Contributing to success (n=245)

Teachers and staffing resource	70%[5]
Teacher training and skills development	18%
Resources and funding	18%
Family engagement to support pupils	17%
A shared set of objectives, collective focus	13%
Use of data and evidence to inform approaches	13%
Effective targeting of support	13%

Potential barriers to success (n=247)

Staffing, staff time and workload	51%
Resources and wider funding	24%
Family engagement	22%
Mental health, behavioural issues and support needs of pupils	14%
Wider community issues, pupils' experience at home and family wellbeing	14%
Organisational issues, reporting and paperwork requirements	12%
Difficulties ensuring effective targeting	10%
Teacher training and skills development	9%

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[5] Percentage results are based on those answering the question.

Sustainability

6.6. Around 2 in 5 (42%) survey respondents expect that improvement as a result of ASF supported interventions will be sustainable beyond the years of funding. This represents a 16 point reduction from the 2017 survey, where 58% of respondents felt improvements would be sustainable. However, it should be noted that a substantial proportion (42%) of respondents were unsure of the sustainability of impacts, and only 16% were of the view that impacts would not be sustainable.

6.7. Survey findings also suggest a correlation between views on sustainability and perception of improvement to date; those who have seen improvement in attainment or wellbeing to date are significant more likely than others to expect improvements to be sustainable beyond funding.

6.8. The survey asked headteachers to expand on why they do (or do not) expect improvements to be sustainable. Responses give an indication of the factors influencing views here.

Why feel improvement will be sustainable (n=115)

Staffing training, skills development and capacity building	70%[6]
Embedded practice, pedagogy development	26%
Raising awareness and change of ethos/culture	20%
Ongoing access to resources	13%
Developed a collective, shared focus	10%
Developed capacity to use data/evidence to inform approaches	9%
Collaboration within school, with partners and parents	7%
Longer-term health and wellbeing impacts	6%

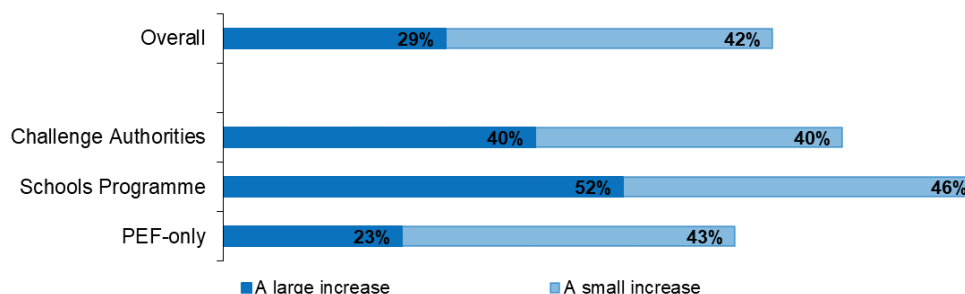**Why feel improvement will not be sustainable (n=47)**

Loss of staffing, resources and skills	81%
Loss of initiatives and interventions	28%
Loss of external support and access to services	12%
Too early to tell	12%
Pupils' health and wellbeing needs	9%
Reduction in local funding/resourcing	7%

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[6] Percentage results are based on those answering the question.

Collaborative working

6.9. The majority of headteachers have seen an increase in collaborative working in their school as a result of ASF support. Around 7 in 10 (71%) indicate this, including around 3 in 10 (29%) who have seen a large increase in collaborative working.

6.10. Survey responses indicate significant variation across funding streams in the extent to which ASF support has led to an increase in collaborative working. Schools Programme respondents are more likely than others to have seen an increase in collaborative working as a result of funding (98% have done so), while PEF-only schools are least likely to have seen such a change (66%).

Whether seen increase in collaborative working as result of Fund

6.11. The survey asked headteachers to expand on why they feel there has been an increase in collaborative working as a result of ASF support. These are summarised below.

Greater emphasis on collaboration from school leadership, empowerment of teaching staff	41%[7]
More staff resourcing and staff time	23%
Collaboration embedded as a key part of CPD	16%
Change of culture/ethos across the school	12%
More opportunities for collaboration and partnership	12%

N=227

6.12. A small number of respondents who feel the Fund has not led to greater collaboration within their school provided further comment on this. These respondents (around 2% of all survey respondents) most commonly referred to a culture of collaboration already being well-established prior to the school receiving ASF support. Some also referred to ASF support not having had sufficient impact on

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[7] Percentage results are based on those answering the question.

staff time or opportunities within their school for collaborative working.

Unintended consequences

6.13. In addition to views on the extent to which interventions had produced the anticipated impacts, the survey also asked headteachers about any unintended consequences of ASF support.

6.14. Nearly 2 in 5 (38%) respondents have seen unintended positive consequences as a result of their receipt of ASF funding, and nearly 1 in 5 (18%) have seen unintended negative consequences. These findings are broadly consistent across key respondent groups, although primary school respondents are more likely than secondary school respondents to have seen unintended negative consequences.

6.15. The survey asked headteachers to expand on the unintended consequences they had seen as a result of ASF support. Responses are summarised below.

Unintended positive consequences (n=108)

More and better collaboration and partnership working	28%[8]
Training and skills development for staff	21%
Improved pupil and parent engagement, attendance	19%
A change in school ethos/culture, a shared focus	16%
More leadership opportunities for staff	12%
Better awareness/understanding of the attainment and wellbeing gap, recognition of the value of targeting	7%
More and better use of data/evidence	7%

Unintended negative consequences (n=66)

Additional workload for leadership, management and administrative roles	39%
Reporting requirements, pressure to demonstrate improvement	20%
Reduction in other resourcing, loss of free access to 3rd sector support, perception that 'awash' with funding	9%
Potential for schools, pupils or parents to feel excluded where not the focus of ASF	9%
Recruitment difficulties	6%
Difficulty balancing ASF with other priorities	3%

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[8] Percentage results are based on those answering the question.

7. Governance and administration

7.1. The survey built on previous exercises by asking for headteachers' views on national and local governance and organisation around the Attainment Scotland Fund, and the support they receive from Scottish Government, Education Scotland, their Attainment Advisor and/or their local authority.

7.2. Respondents were asked to indicate what they felt was working well and what could be improved around: i) Challenge Authority/Schools programme funding and ii) Pupil Equity Funding. Responses are summarised below.

7.3. This suggests that views are broadly similar to those expressed through the 2017 survey, with local authority and Attainment Advisor support the main positives, and organisational and staffing issues the main areas for improvement. However it is notable that the greater autonomy and flexibility provided to schools has been added as a key positive this year, primarily based on feedback from PEF-only schools.

Working well	CA/SP (n=175)	PEF (n=184)
Support from local authorities	30%	17%[9]
Support from Attainment Advisors	23%	14%
Collaboration and sharing of practice/experience	15%	11%
Access to resources and funding	7%	15%
Greater autonomy/flexibility for schools	-	15%
Positive experience of initiatives	5%	9%
A collective, shared focus	4%	5%

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[9] Percentage results are based on those answering the question.

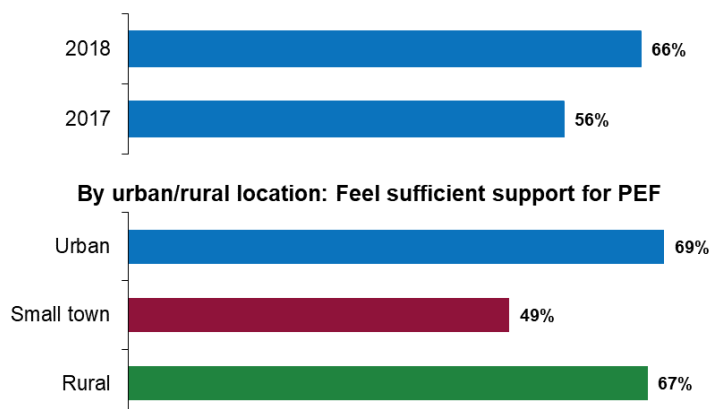| Could be improved	CA/SP (n=87)	PEF (n=139)
Need to address organisational issues, bureaucracy	22%	19%
Staffing issues, insufficient resourcing, workload	14%	12%
More collaboration, sharing of practice and experience required	13%	19%
More support required from local authorities	11%	9%
More support required from Attainment Advisors	3%	-
Better access to resources and guidance required	3%	12%
Inaccurate or imprecise targeting of pupils	3%	7%
A consistent, shared focus required	2%	4%

8. Pupil Equity Funding

8.1. Following the introduction of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) in 2017/18, the 2018 survey is the first to include schools in receipt of PEF who are not also part of the Challenge Authority or Schools Programme streams. The survey also incorporated a more significant focus on schools' experience around application for and receipt of PEF.[10] This gathered views on access to information and support around the development of school plans for PEF, on the implementation of PEF within schools, and on the processes around the allocation of PEF. This section summarises responses.

Developing schools' approach

8.2. Around 2 in 3 (66%) schools feel there was sufficient support in place to develop and implement their school plan for PEF. This represents a 10-point improvement on the 2017 survey (56% felt there was sufficient support in place). There is no significant variation in views across funding streams, but survey responses show some variation across geographic areas. In particular, headteachers of schools in areas defined as 'small towns' are less likely to feel they had access to sufficient support (49% compared to 69% of rural and urban schools).

8.3. There remains 1 in 4 respondents (25%) who feel there was insufficient support available. Written comments indicate this is most commonly related to a perception that schools had insufficient planning time for the 2017/18 allocation, including reference to spending deadlines from local authorities. Some felt this limited scope for more strategic planning. Respondents also referred to the substantial time commitment required for planning, implementation and ongoing evaluation of interventions. Comments also suggested there was insufficient support where schools experienced recruitment and staffing difficulties, and some wished to see more training and advice around budget management and tracking – including reference to a lack of clarity around costs at the planning stage.

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[10] The 2017 survey included a small number of questions on PEF for schools also in receipt of Challenge Authority of Schools Programme support.

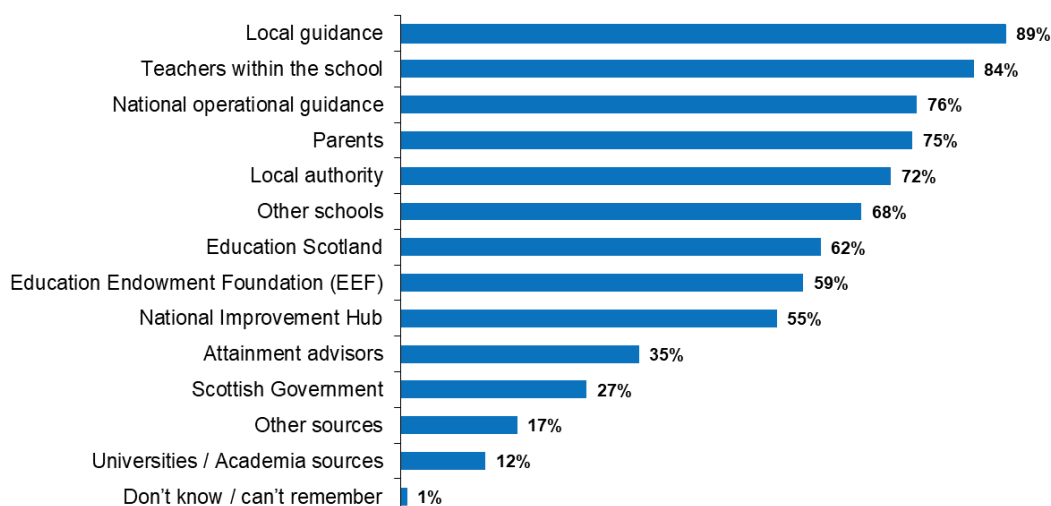**Whether felt sufficient support to develop and implement school plan for PEF**

2018	66%
2017	56%

By urban/rural location: Feel sufficient support for PEF

Urban	69%
Small town	49%
Rural	67%

8.4.   In terms of information sources used by schools in developing plans for PEF, most respondents had used two or more specific sources. The most commonly used were local guidance published by local authorities (used by 89%), teachers within the school (84%), Scottish Government national operational guidance (76%), parents (75%) and the local authority (72%).

8.5.   Results show some differences from the 2017 survey in use of specific information sources, the most significant being an increase in the proportion of schools consulting with parents when developing PEF school plans.[11] Variation is also evident across funding streams; Schools Programme schools are more likely than others to consult Attainment Advisors, and less likely to consult the National Improvement Hub, local guidance and teachers.
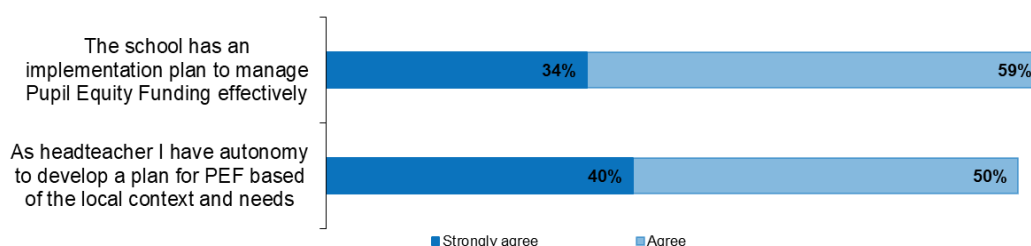
Information sources used when developing plan for PEF

Local guidance	89%
Teachers within the school	84%
National operational guidance	76%
Parents	75%
Local authority	72%
Other schools	68%
Education Scotland	62%
Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)	59%
National Improvement Hub	55%
Attainment advisors	35%
Scottish Government	27%
Other sources	17%
Universities / Academia sources	12%
Don't know / can't remember	1%

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[11] There was a change to the structure of this question for the present survey that may have affected responses, and it will be important to continue to monitor trends in use of information sources through any future surveys.

8.6.   The great majority of schools have an implementation plan to manage PEF effectively (93%), and headteachers feel they have autonomy to develop PEF plans that are responsive to their local context and needs (89%). Very few respondents disagree with either statement.

8.7.   These results are consistent across funding streams and other key respondent groups. However, there has been an 8-point increase since the 2017 survey in the proportion of headteachers who feel they have autonomy to develop plans based on local context and needs (from 81% in 2017 to 89% in 2018).

Views on development and implementation of PEF in school

8.8.   Schools in receipt of Pupil Equity Funding alongside Challenge Authority or Schools Programme support were asked to reflect on the additional benefits of receiving both funding streams, and any additional challenges encountered. Responses are summarised below.

Benefits of PEF alongside CA/SP (n=185)

Additional resourcing enables schools to build on CA/SP initiatives, target a wider range of pupils	49%[12]
PEF provides greater autonomy and flexibility for schools, alongside more consistent authority-wide approaches	19%
Access to more partnership working, support and strategic input	8%
Funding additional CPD for teaching staff	6%
Able to extent support offered to parents and wider community	3%

Challenges of PEF alongside CA/SP (n=144)
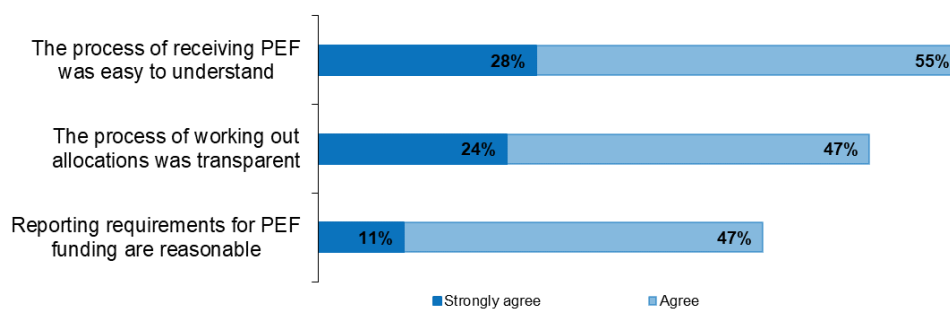
Additional workload and management requirements	51%
Accountability for substantial additional funding, challenges around demonstrating impact	36%
Ensuring a coordinated approach across multiple initiatives, working with different planning structures/timescales	16%
Challenges around recruitment and procurement	11%
Ensuring sustainability	3%

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[12] Percentage results are based on those answering the question.

Views on PEF processes

8.9.   Finally in relation to Pupil Equity Funding, views are generally positive in relation to processes around the allocation of funding. A large majority feel that the process of receiving PEF is easy to understand (83%), and respondents also generally agree that the process of working out allocations has been transparent (71%). There is some variation in views across funding streams, with PEF-only schools and those in receipt of a lower PEF allocation typically less positive about the transparency of the allocation process. Schools Programme schools are most positive on this issue.

8.10. Views are more divided in relation to reporting requirements for PEF funding. More than half (58%) of respondents feel these are reasonable, but there remain nearly 1 in 5 (17%) who disagree. Views on reporting requirements are least positive amongst PEF-only schools (55% feel they are reasonable), and most positive amongst Schools Programme respondents (85%).

Views on processes around Pupil Equity Funding allocation

social research

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