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Pupil Deprivation Grant

Short guidance for practitioners



Guidance

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Pupil Deprivation Grant – Short guidance for practitioners

Audience	Schools; regional consortia leads for pupil deprivation and school effectiveness; regional consortia systems leaders; local authority education and children’s services.
Overview	This guidance informs the effective use of the Pupil Deprivation Grant ensuring visible accountability.
Action required	None – for information only.
Further information	Enquiries about this document should be directed to: Deprivation and Engagement Team Support for Learners Division Department for Education and Skills Welsh Government Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ Tel: 029 2082 3630 e-mail: DeprivationandEngagement@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Additional copies	This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government’s website at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills
Related documents	<i>Building a Brighter Future: Early Years and Childcare Plan</i> (Welsh Government, 2013); <i>Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan</i> (Welsh Government, 2013); <i>Communities, Families and Schools Together: A route to reducing the impact of poverty on educational achievement in schools across Wales</i> – research report commissioned by Save the Children Wales (David Egan, Save the Children Fund, 2012); <i>The DIY Evaluation Guide</i> (Education Endowment Foundation, 2013); <i>The educational attainment of looked after children and young people</i> (Wales Audit Office, 2012); <i>Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools</i> (Estyn, 2012); <i>Guidance for literacy and numeracy catch-up programmes</i> (Welsh Government, 2012); The Sutton Trust – EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit (The Sutton Trust); <i>Tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment</i> (Welsh Government, 2012).

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Foreword

This guide is part of a suite of documents that provide guidance on the School Effectiveness Grant (SEG), The Welsh in Education Grant (WEG), the Band 4 and 5 grant and the technical appendices. It has been issued in advance of the other documents to enable practitioners to plan how they will most effectively spend their allocation on sustainable interventions to improve the attainment of children living in poverty. The Learning Wales website provides useful guidance, resources and case studies and schools are urged to make good use of them.

Practitioners are urged not to print and save a hard copy of this guidance but to refer to the online version to ensure that they are accessing the most recent iteration. As this guidance is refined and updated, schools and the wider educational community in Wales will be notified by announcements in the Welsh Government's e-bulletin, Dysg.

Executive summary

In 2014–15 the per-pupil allocation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) will rise from £450 to £918. This rise is for **one year only** and will return to £450 in 2015–16. Schools are expected to make the best use of this funding to implement sustainable solutions that will quickly bring about changes for learners eligible for free school meals (e-FSM) or who are looked after children (LAC). Employing additional staff is only a sustainable use of funding where schools identify how they will continue to employ staff beyond the period of the grant. Additional staff, including teaching assistants are most effective when they receive appropriate training and are deployed on carefully planned and monitored interventions.

What the PDG supports

The PDG must only be used to improve attainment for e-FSM and LAC learners. It is intended to overcome the additional barriers that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds face which prevent them from attaining as well as their peers, whatever their ability.

The PDG may be used for whole-school initiatives that will particularly benefit learners who are e-FSM and LAC. These include whole staff development activities such as INSET days which focus on the impact of deprivation on attainment and train staff to use strategies which are known to be particularly effective. Successful strategies include the use of feedback, working with parents/carers, metacognition and learning about learning.

The grant can be used to introduce effective tracking systems which identify needs and help practitioners to design tailored solutions which can be monitored and evaluated for impact.

Implementing catch-up can be highly effective since learners who are helped to catch up, given the right support, usually maintain this level.

learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/catchupguidance/?lang=en

What the PDG must not be used for

The funding is **not** for tackling underachievement across the school. The SEG provides support to improve underachievement generally, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy. The RAISE grant failed to achieve its objective to reduce the difference in attainment between e-FSM learners and their peers because many schools focussed on under-achievement, rather than tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment.

The grant must not be used for strategies to tackle particular barriers faced by learners who are already supported through funding from another source. This includes ethnic minority learners, Gypsy and Traveller learners or those with special educational needs. These learners, however, may be supported by the PDG if their support needs are linked to being e-FSM or LAC.

The grant does not have to be tracked to individual learners, but schools must bear in mind that they will be held accountable for how they use the grant. Estyn inspectors will be assessing how schools make use of resources to support learners who are e-FSM or LAC. Schools must also publish online their PDG allocations, targets and outcomes. How well e-FSM learners perform is also a feature of the secondary school banding formula.

The terms and conditions of the grant and the allocations for 2014–2015 have not changed. (The allocations table for the grant is included at Annex B, page 22)

The Welsh Government reserves the right at any time to recover the grant, in whole or in part, to the extent that it is not used for an eligible purpose or if the Welsh Government considers that any other terms or conditions of the grant is not being fulfilled.

The Welsh Government will be undertaking stocktakes with regional consortia during the spring term to seek assurance that the PDG is being effectively targeted. At the Welsh Government's request, consortia will follow up individual schools to further reassure themselves that the PDG monies will have the necessary impact in 2014/15.

The purpose of these measures is to provide assurance that plans for the PDG spend in 2014/15 reflect Welsh Government guidance on effectively targeting deprived learners.

Section 1: Reducing the impact of poverty on educational achievement

Introduction

The Welsh Government is committed to eradicating child poverty by 2020 and outlined its steps to achieving this in its refreshed Tackling Poverty Action Plan, *Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan*: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/socialjustice/publications/taking-forward-tack-pov-plan/?lang=en>

The most effective way of ensuring that those born into poverty are not destined to remain poor is to equip them with an education that will improve their life chances. Schools have an important role to play in improving the outcomes for children from deprived backgrounds both independently of, and in partnership with other initiatives designed to tackle the root causes of deprivation.

Overall the progress of learners eligible for free school meals (e-FSM) compares poorly with their peers. Children born into poverty begin with a disadvantage that accumulates throughout their educational careers. This growth in the gap in attainment demonstrates the need for targeted intervention.

Building Resilient Communities sets targets to improve the attainment of this group of learners.

- To narrow the gap in attainment levels between learners aged seven eligible for free school meals and those that are not eligible for free school meals, who achieve the expected levels at the end of the Foundation Phase, as measured by the Foundation Phase Indicator, by 10 per cent by 2017. (The difference between e-FSM and non-FSM attainment in 2012 was 18.3 percentage points)
- To improve the overall attainment levels of students eligible for free school meals, measured as the proportion of learners eligible for free school meals at age 15 who achieve Level 2 inclusive at Key Stage 4 (GCSE grade C or above including English or Welsh and Mathematics or equivalent), to 37 per cent by 2017. (In 2012 it was 23.4 per cent.)

Priorities

The key priority for the Welsh Government is to ensure that the investment made through the PDG has a lasting impact on outcomes for learners from deprived backgrounds and that this impact is sustainable. We expect schools to spend their PDG allocation on interventions which will continue to support economically disadvantaged learners should the grant be discontinued. For example, the grant could be used to invest in programmes which will train and upskill existing staff.

Schools are expected to be making use of evidence-based approaches such as those described in the Education Endowment Foundation Sutton Trust toolkit, those highlighted in the Estyn report on *Effective Practice in Tackling Poverty and Disadvantage in Schools*: www.estyn.gov.uk/english/search/?keywords=Poverty; and Save the Children Wales's report, *Communities, Families and Schools Together*. In order to make these tools easily accessible, we have grouped them together on the Learning Wales website under the Poverty Improvement Area. learning.wales.gov.uk/improvementareas/poverty/?lang=en#/improvementareas/poverty/?lang=en)

Examples from the Estyn report include taking a whole school strategic approach to tackling disadvantage; developing social and emotional skills of disadvantaged learners; and engaging parents and carers to help them and their children to overcome barriers to learning.

Schools should also make use of data tracking to identify need, design interventions, monitor implementation and evaluate impact. The Education Endowment Foundation Sutton Trust toolkit provides a *DIY Evaluation Guide* for schools and teachers to support this objective. <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evaluation/diy-evaluation-guide/>

How to achieve this

No one factor is key to enhancing children's outcomes; it is the experience over time which matters. There are a number of important elements.

- A good early years home learning environment.
- An effective primary school.
- Good transitional arrangements from early years provision into mainstream schooling and from primary into secondary school.
- Effective 'catch-up' programmes to ensure that difficulties with literacy and numeracy do not impact on general attainment.
- An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) which ensures that all learners receive an education best suited to their needs.

Engagement

Research indicates that effective family and community engagement can have a positive impact on outcomes for all, but especially for learners from more deprived backgrounds. Schools should identify interventions that are effective in supporting parental and community engagement from the earliest opportunity. In particular, those in Communities First (CF) areas should look for opportunities to work with the CF Clusters. Schools' strategies for the PDG should actively support the Learning Communities theme of the Communities First Programme and ensure that there is coherence and join-up with Families First and Flying Start provision to support families in their communities.

Parents and carers have an important role in supporting their child's education, not just in the early years but throughout their education. Schools and regional consortia should be considering what activities schools can undertake in ensuring this message is communicated and in drawing parents into the learning process.

Guidance on parental and community engagement is being developed and will be posted on Learning Wales in the spring of 2014.

Early Years and Foundation Phase

International research demonstrates the potential long-term benefits of investment in childcare and early education, especially for disadvantaged groups. The evidence concludes that good quality early years (0–7 years) education can boost children's cognitive and social skills, which gives them a better foundation for success at school. It is this potential for educational success that is followed by increased success later on in life through employment.

The PDG supports learners from the age of five and many schools will benefit from having effective transitional arrangements in place to support children as they move from home, childcare and Flying Start into the Foundation Phase. Heads of Foundation Phase within local authorities have said that where transitions are well managed children settle into school more readily. Estyn advocates effective transitions from one stage of learning to the next to support a child's continuous development, and help to reduce the likelihood of regression. The way that Flying Start settings, pre-school and childcare providers, schools and the key professionals within those settings work together is critical.

We want consortia to work with schools, early years and childcare providers to assist children to move from one phase of learning to the next; improve standards and educational outcomes; and ensure that no child falls through a gap. This will require a proactive approach to key transition points for children and their families.

The Welsh Government's Early Years and Childcare Strategy, *Building a Brighter Future*:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/building-a-brighter-future/;jsessionid=D72622CF0BD0F0074C90E2868A30AA42?lang=en>

was published in July 2013 and as initiatives are developed to improve the school readiness of children from deprived backgrounds, information will be included on Learning Wales.

School strategies

School strategies for the PDG should reflect the good practice report produced by Estyn in November 2012, *Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools*.

Accountability

Appropriate accountability structures are critical but must be proportionate and add value rather than absorb valuable resources. School development plans, therefore, can provide a vehicle for this. Consortia and local authorities should support schools in drafting their development plans to ensure that they:

- produce a costed annual programme of collaborative, evaluative, developmental activities that clearly support the consortia and local authority's overall strategy for the use of the grant funding
- plan and realise objectives identified in local authority strategies, Children and Young People Partnership Plans and each school's development plan
- feature school and professional development activity systematically taking account of data made available in Estyn's annual report on standards in schools in Wales and information provided by the Welsh Government on the comparative achievements of 7, 11 and 14 year olds in their National Curriculum Assessments as presented in All Wales Core Data Sets and through national and regional publications
- monitor programme delivery and expenditure against budget
- make available copies of the annual programmes for examination by school inspectors, the Wales Audit Office and local authority and consortia staff
- provide local authorities and consortia with information required for programme monitoring and evaluation returns to the Welsh Government.

Schools must ensure that any likely under-spend is surrendered to the local authority and consortium as soon as possible, so that it can be put to good use elsewhere.

Where schools fail to comply with these requirements, delegated funds may be withdrawn, in whole or in part.

Schools are required to publish online their PDG allocation, together with details of how they have utilised the grant, the grant spend and its impact, to ensure that they are accountable for their performance to parents/carers and the wider community and that they have addressed the specific focus of the funding.

Secondary school banding also takes account of the relative performance of e-FSM learners in a school compared with other schools in the same family. The School Standards Unit will also, as part of their regional stock takes, assess the use and impact of the Pupil Deprivation Grant.

Estyn and accountability

Estyn already considers how well schools support standards of groups of learners. From September 2014 inspectors will be required to comment under this section in particular on how learners eligible for free school meals are supported to improve their rates of attainment. There will also be a specific requirement for inspection reports to refer to how well schools make use of resources, such as the PDG to support this group of learners.

Looked after children (LAC)

Arrangement for supporting learners who are LAC in 2014–15 are under review to ensure the grant funding has greatest impact. Details of any changes will be provided separately later this term. However, the principles of supporting learners who are LAC as described below still apply.

The educational attainment of learners who are LAC is still too low and these vulnerable children remain a priority. In implementing interventions and approaches for raising the educational attainment of these children an assessment should be made of the evidence base available of what is effective.

Working with key stakeholders, the Department for Education and Skills is developing the 'Looked after children in education plan'. The plan will set out the actions we will take over the short, medium and long term to ensure looked after children and care leavers are supported to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them to maximise their potential. It will respond to the Wales Audit Office's Report, *The Educational Attainment of Looked After Children and Young People*, (2012) and should be viewed as the delivery vehicle which will take forward the ministerial commitment to improve educational outcomes for looked after children.

Support for looked after children features in both SEG and PDG funding. Consequentially activities undertaken under both funding streams should complement each other.

Targeted intervention

It is important to remember that PDG is for targeted interventions to support learners from deprived backgrounds to reach their potential. This includes very able learners who, if they were supported to overcome the barriers resulting from living in poverty could be expected to achieve above average results. In any school there will be learners who are not eligible for free school meals nor who are looked after but who require additional support to achieve their full potential. Interventions to support other learners can be paid for by the SEG.

Section 2: Delivering effectively

This section provides information on a number of related areas, of which regional consortia are expected to take account in preparing their spending plans and in their planning processes for the PDG. Information on the following areas is provided.

- Continuing professional development (CPD).
- Partnership and sharing effective practice.
- System leaders.

The principle of a National Model for Delivering Education Improvement in Wales has been agreed with the Minister for Education and Skills and endorsed by local government. Key elements of the national model are to be in place by April 2014.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

The consortia are expected to support practitioners' professional development, including developing effective leadership at all levels. Schools are most successful when they develop skills and expertise across the whole school to recognise and address the needs of disadvantaged learners, from school leaders and governors, to class teachers and support staff. In particular, the effectiveness of teaching assistants can be improved where they are trained together with class teachers on intervention programmes. Teachers are helped to improve their skills in working with teaching assistants through class observations, monitoring levels of contact and making sure that teaching assistants understand what children are meant to be 'learning', rather than just 'doing'.

Consortia should work with schools to promote collaborative approaches such as:

- coaching and mentoring by the most effective practitioners
- action-based enquiry methods such as professional learning communities
- attendance at literacy and numeracy seminars and other similar events
- provision to promote progressive development of leadership skills and behaviours
- high-quality accredited practical programmes and/or modules as set out in the Masters in Educational Practice (MEP), launched in September 2012. A module on poverty will be published on the Learning Wales website in Spring 2014.

Performance management arrangements should link to the school's improvement priorities and should be supported by appropriate CPD to improve learner outcomes.

Partnership and sharing effective practice

Practitioners and schools should make the most of opportunities to work in partnership with other schools, their communities and other organisations. This may include joint professional development; joint strategies to counter disaffection and

underachievement; or involving local businesses to introduce careers paths and the world of work in a way that encourages the use of learners' questioning skills.

System leaders

System leaders have a key role in monitoring and providing support and challenge to schools, and identifying and disseminating good practice. The focus of system leaders within each consortium is the raising of standards of attainment and achievement of learners.

System leaders within each consortium will provide:

- monitoring, challenge, intervention and support
- whole-school intervention and support
- curriculum and pedagogic intervention and support.

They will focus on ensuring that schools' performance improves. This means tackling the variations of performance that exist between and within schools and the effects of social deprivation on educational performance. System leaders will have a role to play in ensuring effective deployment of the PDG ensuring that schools learn from the effective practice that exists across the system and that schools are encouraged to work collaboratively.

Section 3: Outputs and outcomes

More details of the information the consortia are required to submit in their spending plans is included in the core guidance. In summary, consortia will be required to detail inputs, activity, outputs and outcomes but schools are not required to produce this level of detail. These are defined as follows.

- **Inputs:** resources, in this case PDG funding and human resource.
- **Activity:** action required, for instance, recruitment of outstanding teachers.
- **Outputs:** evidence of activities, e.g. the number of teachers that have received catch-up training.
- **Outcomes:** the difference/impact, e.g. improvement in literacy and numeracy levels.

Consortia are expected to be clearly utilising assessment data to target inputs to activity and to be able to track resulting outputs against outcomes. **All consortia will be required to measure impact against outcomes in their reports for the 2014–15 year of PDG funding.**

Delegating funding to schools – Pupil Deprivation Grant

The Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) will be delegated to schools in its entirety (100 per cent). Schools are encouraged to operate in clusters or groups and to pool resources to ensure greater effectiveness and better value for money. This is particularly relevant for schools that receive relatively small grant allocations because they have small numbers of e-FSM learners or looked after children.

Each school cluster is responsible for overseeing the successful implementation of local, regional and national strategies and ensuring that strategies are properly evidenced and evaluated to impact. This work should be supported by the consortium and local authority. In many cases, schools will operate on the basis of natural clusters feeding a common secondary school, but schools and their local authorities or regional consortia may agree alternative groupings to serve local needs or particular situations. They should also seek to work in partnership to maximise the benefits of partnership working, for example with Families First, Flying Start and Communities First.

Schools are encouraged to promote actions that will ensure the PDG is used to support interventions and practices that are proven to have the greatest impact and to be sustainable. Examples are provided in Estyn's report, *Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools* (November 2012); the Sutton Trust Toolkit; and Save the Children's report, *Communities, Families and Schools Together* (Egan, D, May 2012). The Learning Wales website is also a good source of information on strategies to support learners through, for example, improving thinking and learning skills: www.learning.wales.gov.uk. The Welsh Government has issued guidance on the most effective catch-up schemes which can be found here: <http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/catchupguidance/?lang=en>

Consortia reporting requirements

The consortia are required to submit a highlight report in September. This must include commentary on the schools' performance in meeting the targets set out in the schools spending plan. They must report their target outputs in the spending plan in October and an evaluative report in February. The evaluative report must provide an analysis of how expenditure has impacted on educational outcomes and a clear statement of lessons learned.

Allocations

The allocations for the PDG by education consortium are set out at Annex B (page 22). The Grant will be allocated to each school on the basis of the number of learners (aged 5–15) eligible for free school meals, based on PLASC data taken at the January 2013 census point and the number of looked after children (4–15 based on SSDA). Allocations are published at consortia level, rather than school level to prevent the identification of looked after children in individual schools.

Please note, while funding is allocated according to individual learners there is no requirement on schools to track spending against individual children. **The PDG, must, however only be used for interventions that support eligible learners and schools will be held accountable for the way they have used resources to support eligible learners to improve their attainment.**

Evidencing how the impact of poverty on educational attainment has been reduced

Schools will be expected to ensure that activity funded through the PDG contributes to the achievement of the targets laid out in *Building Resilient Communities*. The year 2014–15 will be the third year that schools will receive PDG funding and they should be able to clearly evidence the impact of the funding as outlined below. In particular, schools should be able to demonstrate a reduction in the difference in end of key stage outcomes between learners eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after with the overall school population.

Outcomes

- Schools will be able to demonstrate the gap in attainment between e-FSM learners and non e-FSM learners has decreased over the three-year period.
- Schools will be able to demonstrate the gap in attainment between LAC and all learners has decreased over the three-year period.
- Attendance levels for e-FSM learners supported by the grant will improve.
- Attendance levels for LAC learners supported by the grant will improve.
- PDG funded initiatives will include parental and community engagement and partnership working.

Outputs and activities

Schools should:

- adopt a whole-school strategic approach to tackling disadvantage
- make intelligent use of data tracking systems to identify learners' needs, target interventions and monitor impact
- adopt strategies that involve parents and carers in learners' education
- engage communities in the life of the school and the school in the life of the community; in particular in Communities First areas
- improve attendance
- recognise the relationship between well-being and standards and adapt practise to reflect this
- work in partnership with each other and with other organisations
- employ interventions that are evidentially the most effective.

Local authorities and regional consortia will:

- work in partnership to provide support and guidance to schools on effective interventions
- identify good practice and share this with schools and with each other
- identify and facilitate opportunities for partnership working
- identify and facilitate opportunities for pooling resources, for example, through Communities First, Families First and Flying Start.

Working closely with non-maintained day-care/childcare and Flying Start

Consortia plans must show the following outputs.

- Number of planned activities to share expertise and resources to support children who transition to school from non-maintained settings and childcare providers.
- Details of these activities and continuous professional development of all staff involved.
- Number of children supported.

Evidence

The primary source of evidence will be in consortia PDG spending plans and schools' reports on the use of their PDG. Evidence will also be provided by:

- annual performance data for achievement of Level 2 threshold including English/Welsh and Mathematics (Level 2 inclusive) at the end of Key Stage 4
- teacher assessments
- reading and numeracy test data
- attendance and exclusions data
- Estyn inspections.

Section 4: Communities First Pupil Deprivation Grant Match Fund

Communities First is a key Welsh Government programme for supporting people disadvantaged by poverty in our most deprived areas in Wales.

The Communities First Pupil Deprivation Grant Match Fund was launched in 2013 to encourage further collaboration between schools and their Community First Clusters. The scheme is now closed to applications and the successful projects will be evaluated to gain evidence of effective interventions to improve family and community engagement and their impact on the home learning environment. Case studies will be published on Learning Wales.

Annex A: How to use the Pupil Deprivation Grant (A report by Professor David Reynolds)

Introduction

The Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) makes possible targeted interventions to help our disadvantaged children and through helping them, help all school children do better. The balance of the whole school will improve as the disadvantaged improve. And there is ample evidence which shows that our more disadvantaged children are particularly heavily influenced by the quality of their schools. So improving the quality of what we do for them could have a dramatic influence on individual school results. However, evidence is that, by itself, using the PDG to expand the 'quantity' of people like teachers and classroom assistants in schools may have only very limited effect. Teaching assistants can help with classroom management but they do not seem to be able to promote children's development. Appointing more teachers, and reducing class sizes sounds useful, but children's learning will only improve if teachers and the children do different things in class. These will still be very close to their traditional sizes.

The two major factors

Overall, experience and research suggests that it is the 'quality' of our classrooms and schools, rather than the 'quantity' of the people in them that matters for all children, and for disadvantaged children especially.

Two 'quality' issues really stand out as important for disadvantaged children.

- Maximising teaching quality.
- Maximising school quality.

1. Maximising the quality of classroom teaching

High-quality teaching means teachers inspiring their pupils and encouraging them to have high expectations, having well-managed classrooms, setting clear rules which are understood by every pupil. Also involving pupils in activities through both a high quantity and quality of questioning and managing effectively that most precious commodity of all – time! Having clarity of tasks and exposition generally also matters, as does using pupils' ideas, pacing lessons sensibly and 'matching' of learners and tasks effectively.

Professional development training, observing lessons and teaching methods given by 'experts' in a Department/school by their best colleagues are all effective and powerful ways of furthering teachers' development, as is viewing and implementing the world's best practice featured in articles and sections which will be appearing on the new Learning Wales website over the next few months.

2. Maximising the quality of schools

Effective schools do the following.

- Get the right balance of teaching, focus on it, allocate time to discuss it and resource its improvement.
- Use data, gleaned from reading, for example, to track pupil progress and then intervene promptly and early to prevent pupils' problems escalating.
- Involve pupils fully in the life of the school through using leadership positions, clubs and societies as the 'hooks' to spread involvement, and listen to their children's views.
- Develop a culture of high expectations for all whatever their background, regardless of social disadvantage, gender or ethnicity.
- Involve parents and the community in the life and work of the school.
- Ensure that the school is consistent in how the staff behave, consistent in the support they give, and coherent in the vision they offer pupils. Modern societies may not be as 'cohesive' as historically – the 'C's may matter a great deal now for a school.

The Seven Interventions

In addition to getting things right in the above two major areas, there are seven distinct Interventions which schools will find effective.

1. Giving high-quality feedback to pupils and teachers

Providing feedback to individual pupils and teachers regarding their performance is crucial. It means teachers being clear about the learning goals, relating what the learners are doing at any given point in time to their previous learning, both supporting and challenging pupils. It also means helpful whilst not preventing pupils from working things out for themselves and focussing upon generating achievement through emphasising the positive more than focussing on any negatives. This feedback can be given by teachers and/or by children's peers, in groups or on a one-on-one basis.

Practical point: it is best to focus on quality feedback for the harder or more complex tasks, since they are likely to require more sustained long term efforts that will be positively affected by the feedback.

2. Developing children's 'Learning to learn' skills

These skills – also known in the jargon as 'self-regulated learning', 'thinking about thinking', 'meta-cognitive strategies' and 'thinking skills' – involve helping children to self-manage their own learning. This involves children planning what they are going to do, self-monitoring how they are doing when they are doing it and then evaluating

the quality of what they have done on completion of particular tasks. This ideally would be followed by planning to do better for the next task.

Practical point: planning, monitoring, evaluating and reflecting/re-planning can all be taught to children as explicit strategies, but in the medium to long-term it is essential that the children are able to do these things and further develop their skills for themselves, which then produces their own intellectual and personal development into the lifelong learners that we need.

3. Using peer tutoring/peer-assisted learning

This is based on the old adage that to teach something you have to know it well! In this, pupils teach each other in pairs to support each other and the pupil teacher gains as well as the taught pupil. This can take the form of 'cross-age' tutoring where the tutor child is older than the other, or it can involve children of the same age taking turns to teach each other. In the latter case, one child is often further ahead on the particular task than the other. In the process both the achievement and the self-esteem of the tutor and the tutee improves, and it is the low achieving and disadvantaged children who derive the most out of it.

Practical point: this needs careful organising – matching the pupils, choosing activities that are sufficiently challenging for a tutor to be helpful to a tutee but not too difficult, and choosing the right topics and time allocation to maintain interest.

4. Involving parents and communities in their children's education

Children spend much more time in their homes than in their schools. Getting parents 'on board' is therefore potentially powerful and can be done through:

- encouraging them to actively support their children through help with basic skills and homework
- involving parents in schools, and classrooms, through conventional visits, so they have knowledge about how the system works
- trying to improve parents' own levels of basic skills so they can help their own children better
- providing parents with a wide range of advice material to make their children 'school ready', in terms of what schools need from them, both in terms of academic needs and more general advice.

If parents can be involved in supporting their schools, the positive influence of the school will stretch into the non-school hours in the home. If the children can be made 'school ready', then the effect will be even greater. And if the communities within which parents and children live can also be reached, energised and encouraged to support our schools, then the effects may be dramatic.

Practical point: some schools are now using 'manuals' which they give out at the beginning of the school year which cover topics such as health, nutrition, diet, psychological help, in addition to the 'normal' provision of educational information.

5. Maximising the quality of school leadership at all levels of the school

We know that effective leadership of a school from the headteacher and through to other 'middle leadership' positions is important in its own right and important in facilitating the high-quality classroom teaching that can make a big difference to disadvantaged children. High-quality leadership involves leaders being clear about personal and organisational goals, monitoring their achievement, changing school processes to reach them and having a simultaneous 'push' to get things done and the 'pull' through and fully involving school staff through consultation.

Practical point: leadership needs to focus on teaching and the quality of learning more than anything else – that is what children experience and that is what influences their achievement.

6. Using homework

Tasks to complete outside school time can also further their achievement. They can provide the opportunity for practice, and the routinisation of new skills. They can also involve preparation for classroom work in the future, thereby improving the quality of the classroom learning experience later. At the very least, homework adds to the time that children spend on academically related tasks and doing them may even keep them off the streets! But to be effective, it needs to be integrated with existing lessons rather than be an add-on. It needs to be quickly assessed and fed back to children and be sufficiently inherently interesting to encourage children's participation in settings like homes, where for disadvantaged children particularly there may be distractions!

Practical point: all the evidence is, though, that homework is more effective for secondary rather than primary age children. It should not be overdone by setting much above one to two hours per night.

7. Promoting extracurricular activities

In these, children participate in after-hours activities supervised by teachers and/or other adults. They can be sporting, cultural, concerned with individual school subjects (e.g. Maths Club) or with general study skills. They enhance the amount of learning time, and provide an opportunity for children and teachers to relate in situations less structured than a classroom. Crucially, there is some evidence that more disadvantaged children benefit more than others from these activities academically and that they are likely to have a more positive attitudes to school and to education if they can be helped to participate.

Practical point: the more the activities are tagged to the normal school curriculum the better.

Why focus on these seven issues?

There are of course other things that schools can do in addition to the above two 'big' issues and the seven interventions. Using more ICT, using one-to-one tuition or smaller class sizes may all have some minor effects. But these effects are usually bought at very large financial costs. They have a high cost/benefit ratio. Our list of two, plus seven, factors above come at minor or negligible cost by comparison with total school budgets. They have a low cost/benefit ratio. The low cost is because putting them in place is relatively very quick and easy. The new Learning Wales website is filling up with the very best articles, sections and papers from around the world about literacy, numeracy, behaviour, additional learning needs and reducing the effects of poverty upon educational achievement amongst other things. The Estyn website is a wealth of useful knowledge. Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Wales have considerable expertise that they are generally happy to let go to schools. Private Sector consultancy companies, often set up by exemplary retired Headteachers and leaders, offer useful expertise and experience.

But the most powerful and cheapest expertise is available in our individual schools – in the shape of the exemplary classroom teacher in a primary school, the effective department in a secondary school and the middle leader like a Head of Year. Existing in-service days, twilight sessions and professional development opportunities can be used to make each school's 'best' practice, particularly for its disadvantaged children, its 'standard' practice. Similarly, groups of schools can learn from each other's best practice through collaborative, across school in-service provision. And learning from pre-existing local partners (like Communities First, Flying Start, etc.) and from voluntary and community groups may help with many school/teacher activities.

What should my school do now?

A lot depends on whether there are many children eligible for free school meals in a school. If there are only a few and/or if the school is a small primary school, then the PDG could be targeted at the very small number of children who are disadvantaged by 'stretching' their school experience with extra-curricular programmes and activities, and using the resources to train their teachers so that some of the powerful interventions work in their classrooms – peer tutoring, learning to learn skills and homework are cases in point where the disadvantaged could benefit first as the interventions 'root' in classrooms. If there are larger numbers of disadvantaged children, as in most secondary schools in Wales and the larger primaries, then the sums of money involved could be used for major efforts of school professional development related to the seven discrete interventions.

- Feedback.
- 'Learning to learn'.
- Peer tutoring.
- Parental involvement.

- Promoting leadership.
- Homework.
- Extra-curricular opportunities.

But it is important to make clear in conclusion that ‘whole-school’ actions in the seven areas alone will – while they should have positive effects on all the children in a school – **not of themselves** help those disadvantaged children catch up with others. This needs the special targeting of the interventions in the classes where these children are, and at the disadvantaged individual children in these classes also.

It also means focussing particularly upon the two of the seven interventions that have been shown to particularly affect more disadvantaged children especially positively.

- Peer tutoring.
- Extra-curricular activities.

If your school is a primary one, then all the seven interventions should work, except that using homework may not be particularly relevant with younger children. If you are a secondary one, then all seven should be useful. If your school is socially disadvantaged, then three of the seven interventions may be more appropriate than the others, given that the foundations for learning such as parental involvement and extra-curricular activities are probably already in place, namely:

- feedback
- learning to learn skills
- peer tutoring.

These three interventions are technically quite difficult, and if your school is more disadvantaged in its catchment area, then the more foundational of the seven may be the place to start, involving:

- parental involvement
- high-quality leadership at all levels
- homework
- extra-curricular activities.

Plus of course the more difficult one, because of its power:

- peer tutoring.

Annex B: PDG allocations based on PLASC data (30.07.2013)

	Local authority	Pupils aged 5-15	Pupils aged 5-15 eligible for free school meals	PDG allocations 2014-15 (Excluding LAC)	Allocations for PDG + LAC aged 4-15 From SSDA Data 31.08.2013 By Consortium
North Wales Consortium	Anglesey	7,519	1,539	1,412,802	
	Gwynedd	14,005	1,917	1,759,806	
	Conwy	12,457	2,279	2,092,122	
	Denbighshire	12,291	2,343	2,150,874	
	Flintshire	18,477	2,501	2,295,918	
	Wrexham	15,342	2,781	2,552,958	
				12,264,480	£12,861,180.00
ERW Consortium	Powys	15,034	1,594	1,463,292	
	Ceredigion	7,546	913	838,134	
	Pembrokeshire	14,056	2,586	2,373,948	
	Carmarthenshire	21,510	3,444	3,161,592	
	Swansea	27,474	5,694	5,227,092	
	Neath Port Talbot	16,563	3,846	3,530,628	
				16,594,686	£17,647,632.00
Central South	Bridgend	17,366	3,653	3,353,454	
	Vale of Glamorgan	16,555	2,404	2,206,872	
	Rhondda Cynon Taff	29,565	7,205	6,614,190	
	Merthyr Tydfil	7,070	1,689	1,550,502	
	Cardiff	39,407	8,955	8,220,690	
				21,945,708	£23,082,192.00
South East Wales	Caerphilly	22,644	5,529	5,075,622	
	Blaenau Gwent	7,786	2,323	2,132,514	
	Torfaen	12,239	2,374	2,179,332	
	Monmouthshire	9,277	1,141	1,047,438	
	Newport	18,721	4,183	3,839,994	
				14,274,900	£14,928,516.00
	WALES	362,904	70,893	65,079,774.	£68,519,520.00
FOR COMPARISON: ALL WALES 2013-14				31,619,250	£33,289,200.00

Annex C: Useful resources

Building a Brighter Future: Early Years and Childcare Plan

(Welsh Government, 2013)

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/building-a-brighter-future/?lang=en>

Building Resilient Communities: Taking Forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan
(Welsh Government, 2013)

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/socialjustice/publications/taking-forward-tack-pov-plan/?lang=en>

Communities, Families and Schools Together: A route to reducing the impact of poverty on educational achievement in schools across Wales – research report
commissioned by Save the Children Wales

(David Egan, Save the Children Fund, 2012)

www.savethechildren.org.uk/.../Communities-families-and-schools-together

DIY Evaluation Guide

<http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evaluation/diy-evaluation-guide/>

Dysg newsletter

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/news/?lang=en>

The educational attainment of looked after children and young people

(Auditor General for Wales, 2012)

http://www.wao.gov.uk/news/news_4773.asp

Effective practice in tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools

(Estyn, 2012)

[http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/259977.9/effective-practice-in-tackling-poverty-and-disadvantage-in-schools-november-2012/?navmap=30,163,](http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/259977.9/effective-practice-in-tackling-poverty-and-disadvantage-in-schools-november-2012/?navmap=30,163)

Guidance for literacy and numeracy catch-up programmes

(Welsh Government, 2012)

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/catchupguidance/?lang=en>

Learning Wales website

learning.wales.gov.uk

The Sutton Trust Toolkit

<http://www.suttontrust.com/who-we-are/impact-and-influence/toolkit/>

Tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment

(Welsh Government, 2012)

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/improvementareas/poverty/?lang=en#improvementareas/poverty/?lang=en>