

Report summary

The Pupil Premium

How schools are using the Pupil Premium funding to raise achievement for disadvantaged pupils

The Pupil Premium was introduced in April 2011. In 2012–13 schools were allocated a total of £1.25 billion funding for children from low-income families who were eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from families with parents in the Armed Forces. The aim of this survey was to identify how schools were using this money to raise achievement and improve outcomes for these pupils. The survey is based on the views of 262 school leaders gathered through inspections and telephone interview questionnaires conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Key findings

- Only one in 10 school leaders said that the Pupil Premium had significantly changed the way that they supported pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- School leaders commonly said that they were using the funding to maintain or enhance existing provision rather than to put in place new initiatives.
- Schools did not routinely disaggregate the Pupil Premium funding from their main budget, especially when receiving smaller amounts.
- Over two fifths of the schools had used the Pupil Premium at least in part to fund new or existing teaching assistants and over one quarter to fund new or existing teachers. To a lesser degree, schools had used the funding to pay for new or existing parent support workers, behaviour support workers or counsellors.
- Around a third of school leaders said that they had used the funding for additional curriculum opportunities for pupils both within and outside of normal school hours. A third of all schools said that they had used the funding to subsidise or pay for educational trips or residential visits. Around one in six said that they had used the funding to subsidise or pay for uniform and equipment.
- In some schools it was clear to inspectors that the spending was not all focused on the needs of the specific groups for whom it was intended.

- The survey revealed a lack of transparency in the way that some special schools and pupil referral units received their allocation of Pupil Premium money from their local authority.
- Inspectors saw little evidence of a strong focus on the Pupil Premium by governors or managing committees.
- Just over two fifths of the mainstream secondary school leaders who responded to the telephone survey said that they were involved in the Pupil Premium summer school programme. Very few mainstream primary schools said that they were involved in the Pupil Premium summer school programme.
- Very few schools said the Pupil Premium was having any impact on their approach to admissions or exclusions.¹

¹ The School Admissions Code, published in November 2011 and effective from February 2012, permits academies and free schools to give priority in admissions to pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium. School Admissions Code, Department for Education, 2012, p.10;
www.education.gov.uk/schools/adminandfinance/schooladmissions/a00195/current-codes-and-regulations <http://www.education.gov.uk>.

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