



Buckinghamshire County Council

Education, Skills and Children's  
Services Select Committee

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# Narrowing the Gap

*Narrowing the attainment gap between  
economically and socially  
disadvantaged pupils and their peers in  
Buckinghamshire*

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*Report*

*Ordered by the Committee  
to be printed 18 February 2014*

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## **The Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee**

The Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee is appointed by Buckinghamshire County Council to carry out the local authority scrutiny functions for all policies and services relating to education and learning and children and young people.

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# Foreword

“Narrowing the gap” does not mean narrowing the gap between the highest achievers and underachievers. Narrowing the Gap means boosting the attainment of the most economically challenged children. It is for this reason that the Government has introduced the Pupil Premium grant, aimed at boosting of the attainment of the most deprived and challenged pupils. It is allocated to schools on the basis of the number pupils who have been registered for free school meals at any point in the last six years, children who have been looked after continuously for more than six months, and children of service personnel. From £430 per pupil it has risen to £600 last year to £900 for this academic year.

Above all, narrowing the gap is about changing lives; through changing the educational outcomes of some of the most challenged groups of pupils and thereby improving their prospects throughout their lives. To ensure this we need to focus resources on the children and families who most need support, at as young an age as possible and we need to challenge and test how we are using resources to raise attainment for those pupils against the evidence of its impact to maximise the effect. In particular, schools themselves need to challenge the way they are directing resources and evaluating impact to inform future practice.

There is a wealth of research and guidance available on different approaches and we have been able to see some of the local practice in Buckinghamshire first hand, and it is making a real difference. Some of the ways in which the grant is being used locally is being published consecutively in our report *Narrowing the Gap Case Studies: How Schools are Narrowing the Gap in Buckinghamshire*. Our key message to schools is that we would like to see a more systematic and evidenced based approach to the evaluation, identification and planning of educational programmes, to make sure that the activities funded are making the highest impact. Our key messages to the local authority are that we support a continued focus on early years with a greater focus on families and children that need support the most and a more robust dialogue with schools, with more focused, clearer guidance, training and support.

We have heard from a wide range of expert witnesses during the Inquiry and received written and oral evidence from Head Teachers and school governors in Buckinghamshire. We have involved young people through the Youth Parliament. We have heard from Mr Mike Sheridan and Ms Christine Raeside Her Majesties Inspectors at Ofsted, who were able to provide some insight into the priority Ofsted are now affording to the use of Pupil Premium spending now that it is part of their inspection framework. We have undertaken documentary research on different approaches and received oral and written evidence from a wide range of expert witness and local stakeholders.

It is up to schools how they spend the Pupil Premium grant and we have noted some very good practice locally, but we also want to play our part in driving improvement and sharing ideas, which is consistent with the local authority’s role in supporting school improvement, because maximising pupils’ educational outcomes and narrowing the gap isn’t just a matter of fulfilling the letter of government policy and statutory requirements. It is about making sure that we give all our young people the best opportunity to get the most out of their education and the best start in life that we can.

**Mrs Val Letheren**  
**– Chairman of the Education, Skills and Children’s Services Select Committee**

## **Executive Summary & Recommendations**

The Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee agreed to conduct an in-depth Inquiry in Narrowing the Gap in 2013, to investigate the high attainment gap in Buckinghamshire and to develop proposals to the Buckinghamshire County Council, the Bucks Learning Trust and to local schools to help narrow the gap and raise attainment for economically deprived children in Buckinghamshire.

This is a report of the key findings and recommendations of the Inquiry, which are summarised in the next section and detailed throughout the report.

### Members of the Inquiry

This Inquiry was carried out by a Narrowing the Gap Inquiry working party of the Select Committee. They were:

Councillor Mr Chris Adams  
Councillor Mr Dev Dhillon  
Councillor Mrs Val Letheren  
Councillor Mr Robin Stuchbury  
Ms Rebecca Burchell (Secondary School Sector)  
Mr Michael Moore (Roman Catholic Church)  
Ms Monique Nowers (Primary School Sector).

### Witnesses to the Inquiry

The Select Committee has interviewed a wide range of expert witnesses and local stakeholders during its inquiry, including Councillor Mr Mike Appleyard – Cabinet Member for Education and Skills Buckinghamshire County Council, Professor Dylan William – Emeritus Professor of Education Assessment at the Institute of Education, University of London, Mike Sheridan and Christine Raeside HMI Ofsted, Mr Nick Gibb – MP, former Minister for Education, Professor Anna Vignoles, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge (and member of the Education Endowment Foundation's Evaluation Advisory Group), Mr Robbie Coleman – Research and Communications Manager at the Education Endowment Foundation, Mrs Jatinder Virk - Head Teacher, and Mrs Ann Beaton-Chairman of the Governing Body, The Disraeli School and Children's Centre and David Hood – Headteacher, Cressex Community School, Buckinghamshire.

The Select Committee has engaged with all schools in Buckinghamshire through the Bucks Association of Head Teachers (BASH) and the Primary Executive Board, as well as through an invitation to submit evidence to the Inquiry through a questionnaire survey on how schools are narrowing the gap.

For a full list of witnesses to the Select Committee Inquiry, see page 40.

School responses on how they are narrowing the gap have been considered as evidence by the Select Committee and examples of how Buckinghamshire schools

are narrowing the gap has been published in a separate report available online: see [www.buckscc.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/scrutiny)

Members of the Select Committee have also visited schools to talk to school leaders and see some of the activities first hand, including visits to the Disraeli School and Children's Centre to Cressex Community School in Buckinghamshire. We have also visited Morpeth School in Tower Hamlets to find out about how they have raised achievement for economically deprived pupils.

We hope that this report and our recommendations will serve as a useful reflection and challenge to the local authority and the school community to help towards boosting educational attainment and outcomes for the most deprived children in Buckinghamshire and thereby, narrow the gap.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation One: Targeting Economically Disadvantaged Communities**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to explore the feasibility of establishing Learning Development Centres to offer targeted learning opportunities for parents and children. These centres should be located in areas accessible to economically disadvantaged families.

### **Recommendation Two: The Early Years Curriculum**

In order to promote the Early Years Curriculum, we recommend that the Council pro-actively supports the implementation of Development Matters, Early Years Outcomes, and the new Early Learning Goals for all Early Years providers in Buckinghamshire.

### **Recommendation Three: Children's Centres Review**

We recommend that the planned review of Buckinghamshire Children's Centres focus on a) accessibility and take-up of services by deprived parents and children, b) the location of centres in their role as early intervention hubs, and c) the links between schools and centres.

### **Recommendation Four: An Early Years Pupil Premium**

We recommend that the Schools Forum review the Funding Formula with the objective of targeting additional funding at the children of families from the most deprived backgrounds, in order to assist early years providers to achieve the Government's Early Years Outcomes and the 17 Early Learning Goals.

### **Recommendation Five: Improving Literacy**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member undertake a review on how to improve the performance of phonics and to consider methods to achieve higher levels of literacy for deprived pupils at early years and primary school levels.

### **Recommendation Six: The Role of Parents in Education**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member develop a programme to engage and further involve parents in the education of their children, with a particular focus on supporting parents of the most vulnerable children.

**Recommendation Seven: High Achieving Economically Disadvantaged**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member encourage Buckinghamshire primary schools to provide targeted learning support in order to enable high achieving pupils from deprived background to access grammar schools.

**Recommendation Eight: An Analysis and Challenge Toolkit for Schools**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to develop guidance and online toolkits for schools on:

- project identification and assessment of educational programmes and interventions targeted at the needs of pupils most in need, and
- an evaluation framework template as a practical tool for assessing the impact of narrowing the gap projects.

**Recommendation Nine: Researching and Evaluating What Works**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member apply to the Education Endowment Foundation for funding to undertake an independent peer review of narrowing the gap projects in Buckinghamshire and that this report be shared for best practice.

**Recommendation Ten: Narrowing the Gap Reports to Governing Bodies**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to develop guidance for schools on the roles of governors in developing and implementing narrowing the gap projects, and evaluation of the effects of the Pupil Premium. This should include quarterly/annual reports on these topics to governing body meetings.

**Recommendation Eleven: Lead Governor for Narrowing the Gap**

In order to raise the profile of narrowing the gap within schools, we recommend that school governing bodies consider appointing a lead governor with special responsibility for narrowing the gap and Pupil Premium.

**Recommendation Twelve: Narrowing the Gap Training for School Leaders**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to enhance training opportunities for school leaders on maximising narrowing the gap projects and Pupil Premium including strategic overview, project identification and budget allocation, mid-term review, and evaluation and assessment.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1. Buckinghamshire has some of the best education results and some of the best schools in the country. It also has one of the widest gaps in achievement between economically underprivileged pupils and the average. The percentage of pupils with Free School Meals (FSM) achieving 5+ A\*-C including English Maths fell in 2012 to 29.6% from 34.1%. The gap between the two groups increased. Those with FSM had lower results than national, while the results of those without FSM were higher than national. The KS4 gap was the widest of statistical neighbours and the widest nationally<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2. It should be highlighted, however, that the most recent 2013 data shows significant improvement in narrowing the gap by 7% at primary level and 5% secondary level<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.3. The achievement gap between economically deprived pupils and their peers is a national issue, but more of an issue for some areas, like Buckinghamshire. According to Sir Michael Wilshaw – Chief Inspector of Ofsted, in a recent speech, some of the country's best state schools in wealthy areas are achieving good results for middle-class pupils but are giving those from the poorest homes a “raw deal”<sup>3</sup>. He warned that inspectors will be sent back into schools that are found to be complacent and letting down their most disadvantaged children, and that if they persist in failing the poorest children, these schools can expect to be downgraded, from "outstanding" to "good", or "good" to "satisfactory".
- 1.4. Narrowing the Gap is a Government priority. It is also a priority for Buckinghamshire County Council. In the Education and Skills Strategic Priorities 2013-2017, the Council aims to help children and young people reach their full potential by narrowing the achievement gap between the highest and lowest achieving pupils, so that more children have reached a good level of development by the time they are five, and fewer children under-perform throughout their school years<sup>4</sup>. Reflecting this priority, the Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee decided to undertake an Inquiry into this issue in 2013 and this report outlines its key findings and recommendations.

## Economic Inequality

- 1.5. There is a well established correlation between economic inequality and academic inequality; children from more deprived backgrounds tend to perform less well in education and those from more affluent backgrounds tend to perform better.

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<sup>1</sup> *Educational Standards in Buckinghamshire Schools*, report to the Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2013.

<sup>2</sup> The Department for Education (2014), [www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance)

<sup>3</sup> The Daily Telegraph 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014, Ofsted: Outstanding schools face sanctions for failing the poor.

<sup>4</sup> The Education, Skills and Children's Services Portfolio Plan 2013-2017, (May 2013).



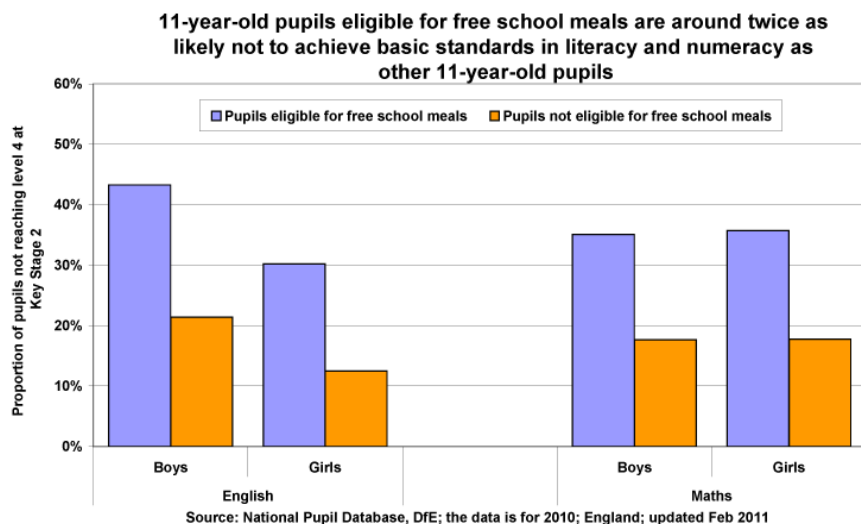
**“There is a clear and consistent link between deprivation and academic achievement”<sup>5</sup>.**

*A Long Division: Closing the attainment gap in England’s secondary schools*

1.6. Eleven year-old pupils eligible for free school meals are, for example, around twice as likely not to achieve basic standards in literacy and numeracy as other Eleven year-old pupils<sup>6</sup>.

1.7. The Boston Consultative Group field research found that 50% of primary school and 24% of secondary school respondents, and many academics surveyed, cited poverty as a cause of low attainment<sup>7</sup>.

1.8. This online tool provides a demographic profile of FSM and IMD against school attainment [www.educationprofiler.org](http://www.educationprofiler.org)



1.9. Buckinghamshire is one of the most economically unequal areas in England. One way of measuring this is to look at Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). If you take IMD Ranks 1-3 (relatively deprived) compared with 8-10 (relatively affluent), Buckinghamshire has a ratio of 1:18, where by comparison the South East region as a whole is 1:3½<sup>8</sup>. It is not surprising; therefore, that Buckinghamshire has one of the widest academic gaps between relatively deprived pupils and their peers.

1.10. This linkage, however, belies a far more complex relationship, with underlying factors such as cultural capital, aspiration, parental engagement, early years development and literacy being key drivers of attainment.

## The Attainment Gap

1.11. The “gap”, as measured by the Government, is the gap between the most economically deprived pupils and their peers; it is not the gap between the highest attaining and least well attaining pupils. This is an important distinction because narrowing the gap does *not* imply a *levelling down* of achievement, but rather improving the educational outcomes of the most deprived pupils, *including* the *highest performing* deprived pupils. This also presents a challenge to some schools, particularly where they have lower numbers of FSM pupils, to target resources towards economically challenged pupils.

<sup>5</sup> Clifton, J., and Cook, W. (September 2012), *A Long Division: Closing the attainment gap in England’s secondary schools*

<sup>6</sup> The National Pupil Database, The Department for Education, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> *Premium Policies: What schools and teachers believe will improve standards for poorer pupils and those in low attaining schools*, The Sutton Trust, January 2012.

<sup>8</sup> IMD Ranks 1-3 compared to 8-10, against mean distribution across England, Buckinghamshire shows a ratio of 1:17.8 where England as a whole is 1:1

- 1.12. To some extent, the gap may reflect the fact that, overall, Buckinghamshire has some of the best overall attainment figures in the country and it is partly due to the successes of many schools and top performing pupils that the gap in attainment is so marked. It is, however, the gap between socially and economically challenged pupils that is being measured here; not the gap between low attainment and high attainment, and as the Inquiry has found, success in raising the achievement of FSM pupils elsewhere shows that poverty need not be an immovable barrier to academic attainment.
- 1.13. Furthermore, as one of our expert witnesses Mr Mike Sheridan HMI Ofsted told us; "It's absolutely not about the gap because you've got so many high achieving pupils, it's about the gap .... in terms of the proportion of (FSM) children leaving schools in your local authority with five good GCSEs including English and maths; it's well below the national average. So you've got the issue of many children doing well, but the poorest children doing significantly less well"<sup>9</sup>.
- 1.14. This echoes the words of the Chief Inspector of Ofsted last year when he warned of the "hidden minority" of poorer under-performing pupils in otherwise affluent and high achieving areas; "On the surface, the overall outcomes for these areas may look good but, for children eligible for free school meals, they hide deep and shocking failure,"<sup>10</sup>

*"Many children from poor families live in urban areas of social and economic disadvantage and go to schools serving concentrations of such pupils. However, many don't live in this kind of place at all. Often they are spread thinly, as an 'invisible minority' across areas that are relatively quite affluent. Where do you think is the worst place in England to be a child from a poor family, in terms of educational opportunity? Is it inner London, Liverpool, Leeds or Manchester? Absolutely not at all. The evidence suggests that it's West Berkshire".*

Sir Michael Wilshaw – Chief Inspector Ofsted, quoted in oral evidence from Mr Mike Sheridan HMI Ofsted 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013

- 1.15. Areas of the County that are relatively deprived may also contain be linked to populations and schools with lower aspirations and expectations of succeeding in education. In order to target resources at economically deprived pupils and to raise expectations, we recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to explore the feasibility of establishing Learning Development Centres to offer targeted learning opportunities for parents and children, targeted towards to economically disadvantaged families.

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<sup>9</sup> Mike Sheridan HMI , OFSTED oral evidence received 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013

<sup>10</sup> Western Daily Press 21<sup>st</sup> June 2013, [www.westerndailynews.co.uk/Rural-poor-fare-worst-school-claims-Ofsted-boss/story-19349740-detail/story.html#ixzz2tAfmAcFg](http://www.westerndailynews.co.uk/Rural-poor-fare-worst-school-claims-Ofsted-boss/story-19349740-detail/story.html#ixzz2tAfmAcFg)

### **Recommendation One: Targeting Economically Disadvantaged Communities**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to explore the feasibility of establishing Learning Development Centres to offer targeted learning opportunities for parents and children. These centres should be located in areas accessible to economically disadvantaged families.

### **The Pupil Premium**

- 1.16. Pupil Premium is additional funding provided to schools so that they can support their disadvantaged pupils and close the attainment gap. In 2012-2013 the Pupil Premium grant was £600 for each child receiving Free School Meals (FSM), Children Looked After (CLA) or with parents in the armed forces. For 2013-2014, the Pupil Premium rose to £1.875 billion, with schools attracting £900 per disadvantaged child.
- 1.17. In 2014-15, the funding will rise to £2.5 billion, with £1300 for primary-aged pupils, £935 for secondary-aged pupils and £1900 for all looked after children, adopted children and children with guardians.
- 1.18. We believe that it is important that Pupil Premium budgets are focused upon raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils, which is, ostensibly, what the grant is provided for) and targeted upon those pupils and on activities which are evidenced to have the highest impact on attainment.
- 1.19. It is up to schools how they spend their Pupil Premium grant and it is incumbent upon the local authority to provide clear guidance on how such resources should be targeted to greatest effect. This, we suggest, falls within the local authority's statutory duty for school improvement.

### **The Buckinghamshire Learning Trust**

- 1.20. In September 2013 Buckinghamshire County Council established a new arrangement for discharging of its school improvement and school services functions through the establishment of the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust, an independent charitable trust which managed the local authority's education services under contract.
- 1.21. We believe this provides a fresh opportunity to re-look at the relationships with and between schools and to re-define the local authority as a champion for children and young people.
- 1.22. During the Inquiry the Committee interviewed Mr Raza Khan - Chief Executive of the Bucks Learning Trust and discussed ways in which the local authority and the Bucks Learning Trust might be able to improve the support and guidance to schools to help them narrow the gap.

### **Comparative Approaches**

- 1.23. The Select Committee Inquiry has considered guidance, comparative approaches and how Buckinghamshire schools are narrowing the gap and has interviewed a

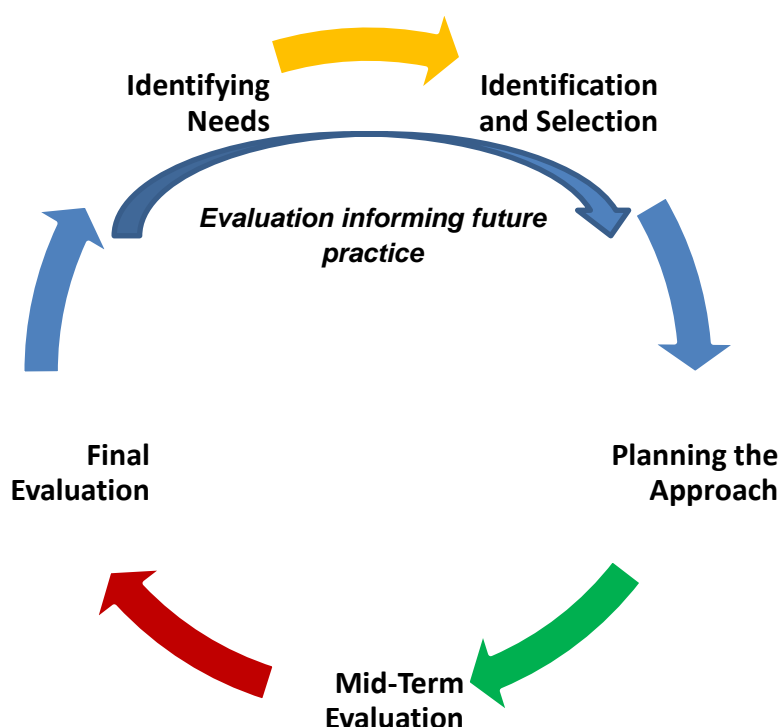
wide range of key stakeholders involved, considered written evidence and visited schools to find out how they are narrowing the gap and how the Pupil Premium is being used in Buckinghamshire and nationally.

- 1.24. The Select Committee Inquiry has considered a range of programmes being used to narrowing the gap in schools, alongside national guidance and oral evidence from a range of local and national stakeholders, including local schools and school governors, Ofsted, the Education Endowment Foundation and the Local Authority and drawn this up into an overview of how programmes might be approached to improve outcomes for young people.
- 1.25. This scrutiny report takes the view that there is no one-size-fits-all and no “right” or “wrong” way to approach narrowing the gap strategies and programmes, but rather tries to adopt a constructive and useful framework, which the local authority and schools may consider. Central themes in our proposals are the importance of early years, of a systematic inclusive evidenced based approach and ensuring that Pupil Premium grants are being used and focused upon maximising the impact on raising pupils’ attainment. Although schools are free to spend the Pupil Premium grant in whichever way they choose, the increased level of Pupil Premium grant, the statutory requirement to publish Pupil Premium policies and expenditure on school websites and the inclusion of the Pupil Premium within the new Ofsted regime, means that there is an increasing focus on how schools are using the Pupil Premium grant to achieve the greatest impact on pupils’ educational attainment.

### **Identification, Planning and Evaluation**

- 1.26. This report identifies key phases for reviewing and evaluating narrowing the gap programmes: identification, planning, delivering and evaluating Pupil Premium programmes and to identify some key areas for consideration by Head Teachers, school governors, teachers and administrators. It also considers the role of school governors in providing leadership, policy oversight and direction, budget and resource setting, policy and performance review, involvement in project review and evaluation and overall evaluation.

## Key Phases for Development, Delivery and Evaluation



### “Know Thy Impact”<sup>11</sup>

- 1.27. We believe that it is important that resources, including Pupil Premium funding, are planned and focused on educational interventions that are proven to provide the highest impact for the most challenged pupils to narrow the educational attainment gap. To do this schools need to take a systematic approach to evaluating what works and what does not work as well to inform and challenge practice, rather than funding programmes which merely replicate practice each year or which are based upon assumptions on impact.
- 1.28. According to the survey carried out by Ofsted in 2012, only 10% of school leaders said that the Pupil Premium grant had significantly changed the way that they supported pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and the funding was commonly used to maintain or enhance existing provision rather than to put in new initiatives<sup>12</sup>.

*“There’s not many things we do in education that decrease kids’ achievement... if you take those kinds of negative ones you expect to be negative out, about 95-97% of things that we do to kids to enhance their achievement work. ...and my frustration in our business is that we have used that zero point so often, that we have got a profession where everything goes,*

<sup>11</sup> John Hattie's Summary: Know thy impact, (2012), <http://vimeo.com/41737863>

<sup>12</sup> The Pupil Premium: How schools are using the Pupil Premium funding to raise achievement for disadvantaged pupils, Ofsted, September 2012

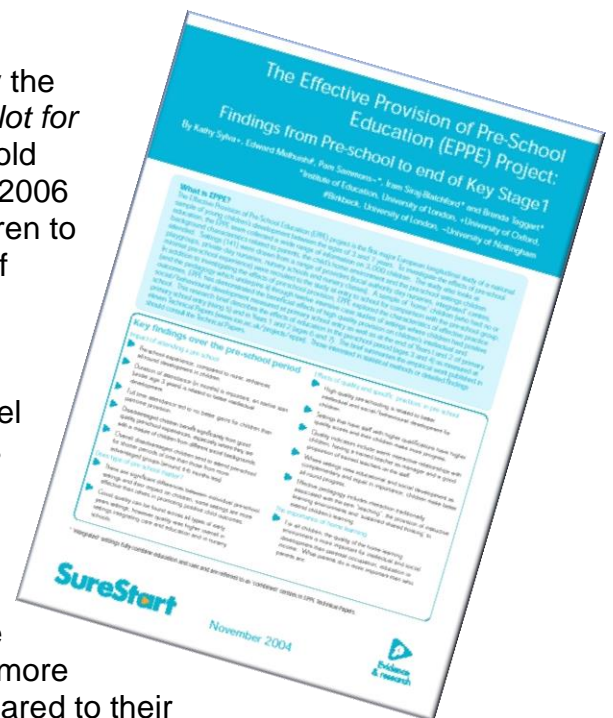
where every teacher is left alone to do what they choose to do and how they choose to do it, because we say “as long as you can show me that you enhance achievement, then I’ll leave you alone”.

Professor John Hattie

See <http://vimeo.com/41737863>

## 2. Early Years

- 2.1. The early years of a child’s life are the formative years and there is overwhelming evidence that children’s later attainment is heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life. According to the Education Endowment Foundation, the gap children and the average was 18% in 2011<sup>13</sup>.
- 2.2. White British boys, children eligible for Free School Meals (FSMs), children from particular ethnic groups and children with SEN reflect the most significant characteristics of underachieving groups at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- 2.3. *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education* by the Institute of Education<sup>15</sup> and *The Early Education Pilot for Two Year Old Children*, which monitored two-year-old children in 32 local authorities in England between 2006 and 2008, demonstrate how important it is for children to be attending early education and childcare that is of good quality to have a significant effect on their cognitive development and future attainment<sup>16</sup>.
- 2.4. 94% of children nationally who achieve a “good level of development” at age five, including in all aspects of communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development, go on to achieve the expected levels for reading at Key Stage 1 and they are five times more likely to achieve the highest level. Pupils who start off in the bottom 20% of attainment at age five are six times more likely to be in the bottom 20% at Key Stage 1 compared to their peers<sup>17</sup>.



<sup>13</sup> The Education Endowment Foundation, The Academies Show 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013

<sup>14</sup> NOTE This is the inequality gap between the lowest achieving 20% and all children, not FSM children

<sup>15</sup> Kathy Sylva, K., Melhuish, E, Sammons, P, Siraj-Blatchford I. and Taggart, B., *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from Pre-school to end of Key Stage 1*, The Institute of Education, University of London, University of Oxford, Birkbeck, University of London, University of Nottingham (2004). [www.ioe.ac.uk/research/153.html](http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/153.html)

<sup>16</sup> *Early Education Pilot for Two Year Old Children Evaluation* Smith, R., Purdon, S., Schneider, V., La Valle, I, Wollny, I, Owen, R and Bryson, C., The National Centre for Social Research and Mathers, S., and Sylva, K., The Department of Educational Studies, University of Oxford Lloyd, E. University of East London (2009)

- 2.5. Pre-school education has a significant positive effect on early cognitive outcomes for all levels of quality and duration compared with none at all, but longer pre-school periods of education has greater benefit on literacy outcomes. Differences in the quality of provision, however, make even more of a difference. It is the combination of high quality and sustained longer periods of pre-school education that demonstrate the clearest impact on attainment.
- 2.6. *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education* demonstrates that, controlled for background influences, by age eleven children, who attended high-quality preschools significantly outperformed those who had not attended pre-school on literacy and numeracy tests.
- 2.7. Although the gap (both national and local) has narrowed between those children reaching a good level of development and those children in the lowest 20% achieving group, more needs to be done to support all children to achieve national expectations by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, at age five.

## Development Matters

- 2.8. Development Matters, published by Early Education, the British Association for Early Childhood Education, demonstrates how the four themes of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and the principles that inform them work together to support the development of babies, toddlers and young children within the context of the EYFS framework<sup>17</sup>. The document also illustrates how the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' may be supported and extended by adults as well as how they underpin the 'Prime' and 'Specific' areas of learning and development.



*“All those working to support the early learning of young children can use Development Matters as part of daily observation, assessment and planning. It can also be used at points during the EYFS as a guide to making best-fit summative judgements, with parents and colleagues across agencies, in relation to whether a child is showing typical development, may be at risk of delay or is ahead for their age”*  
 - Megan Pacey, Chief Executive of Early Education.

- 2.9. As from September 2013 there has been a statutory duty to provide free early education to less advantaged two-year olds. A revised early years foundation stage framework came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012 with 17 early learning goals.

<sup>17</sup> Department for Education(2008)

<sup>18</sup> *Development Matters*, Early Education, the British Association for Early Childhood Education (2012) © Crown copyright 2012

- 2.10. The [early years foundation stage](#) framework sets the statutory standards that all early years providers must meet for all children aged from birth to five years old. This includes all maintained schools, non-maintained schools, independent schools and all providers on the Early Years Register.
- 2.11. The early years foundation stage framework aims to provide:
- quality and consistency in all early years settings
  - a secure foundation that will allow all children good progress through school and life
  - partnerships between different practitioners
  - partnerships between parents or carers and practitioners
  - equality of opportunity for all children.
- 2.12. According to 2012 performance data, the early years foundation stage results improved and the gap between the average and the lowest 20% closed by more the national average, with 65% reaching a good level of development. The gap between the average score of the lowest 20% and the median points score of all pupils narrowed by 2.4% because the average score of the lowest 20% increased by 3.2%, a greater increase than that of pupils overall<sup>19</sup>.
- 2.13. Given the importance of early years provision, especially to children from more deprived backgrounds, we are recommending that the Council actively supports the implementation of Development Matters, the Early Years Outcomes and the new 17 early learning goals for all Early Years providers in Buckinghamshire.

### **Recommendation Two: The Early Years Curriculum**

In order to promote the Early Years Curriculum, we recommend that the Council pro-actively supports the implementation of Development Matters, Early Years Outcomes, and the new Early Learning Goals for all Early Years providers in Buckinghamshire.

- 2.14. During the Inquiry we visited The Disraeli School and Children’s Centre, which provides an integrated setting for early years through to primary school. Children’s Centres can provide a powerful resource for parents with young children and links with schools should be encouraged and enhanced. The Committee supports the County Council’s stance in retaining its children’s centres at a time when many local authorities nationally have decided to close children’s centres to make savings.



*Early Years Reading at The Disraeli School and Children’s Centre*

- 2.15. We also recommend that the planned review of Children’s Centres in Buckinghamshire include consideration of the accessibility and take up of Children’s Centre’s services by the most deprived parents and children, including consideration of the location and

<sup>19</sup> *Educational Standards in Buckinghamshire Schools*, report to the Education, Skills and Children’s Services Select Committee 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2013



strategic accessibility of children's centres as service centre hubs to those who most need early intervention services.

### **Recommendation Three: Children's Centres Review**

We recommend that the planned review of Buckinghamshire Children's Centres focus on a) accessibility and take-up of services by deprived parents and children, b) the location of centres in their role as early intervention hubs, and c) the links between schools and centres.

- 2.16. Ofsted's national director of education, Sue Gregory, has called for an early years Pupil Premium<sup>20</sup>, a call which has been echoed recently by the Deputy Prime Minister.<sup>21</sup> "Schools receive additional funding for their most disadvantaged pupils through the pupil premium. A similar scheme could work in early years to help ensure that high-quality staff are employed where the two-year-old offer is most needed." In principle, we support this idea, since the relative importance of quality early years provision to later attainment is clear.

### **Recommendation Four: An Early Years Pupil Premium**

We recommend that the Schools Forum review the Funding Formula with the objective of targeting additional funding at the children of families from the most deprived backgrounds, in order to assist early years providers to achieve the Government's Early Years Outcomes and the 17 Early Learning Goals.

## **3. Teaching & Attainment**

- 3.1. One of the most important factors that can make a difference to boosting attainment is access to the highest quality teaching and the highest quality teachers. Often, however, the best teachers are placed with the highest performing pupils, which can be a virtuous relationship to support the highest performing classes and schools but can leave the most challenged pupils behind. Sometimes challenged pupils are mentored by less qualified teachers or teaching assistants than they might have access to in class and this can have mixed effects. We believe that if we want to narrow the attainment gap we have to make sure that deprived and challenged pupils are exposed to good teachers in the classroom.

*"Singapore has very selective schools as well and they get uniformly great results partly because they do often give the best teachers to the lowest achieving students"*

Professor Dylan Wiliam Oral evidence received 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

<sup>20</sup> Children and Young People Now Ofsted calls for an 'early years premium' By [Lauren Higgs](#), Monday 03 December 2012 [www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1075575/ofsted-calls-premium](http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1075575/ofsted-calls-premium)

<sup>21</sup> Children and Young People Now Pupil premium extension to pre-schools wins backing from Clegg by [Laura McCardle](#), Thursday 16 January 2014 [www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1141568/pupil-premium-extension-pre-schools-wins-backing-clegg](http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1141568/pupil-premium-extension-pre-schools-wins-backing-clegg)

- 3.2. Quality teaching is the biggest factor in school improvement and improved initial teacher training and professional development can make a major impact in improving the quality of teaching and learning for target pupils<sup>22</sup>.

*“The fact is that the best teachers in England are about four times more productive than the worst teachers. But there are good teachers in every single school”.*

Professor Dylan Wiliam, oral evidence received 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013

- 3.3. The Committee considered an overview of attainment results in Buckinghamshire at different key stages, including the attainment gap of economically deprived pupils and different ethnic groups.

### **Key Stage 1 (Ages 5 – 7)**

- 3.4. In 2012 Buckinghamshire results for FSM attainment gaps at Key Stage 1 narrowed, the increase for pupils with FSM was 9% in reading, 9% in writing and 7% in maths, against 2% in reading and writing for those without FSM and 1% for non-FSM pupils in maths.
- 3.5. Attainment improvement for Pakistani and Mixed White-Black Caribbean pupils was greater than for White British pupils. Black Caribbean pupils, however, had lower attainment results than in the preceding year.

### **Key Stage 2 (Ages 7 – 11)**

- 3.6. The percentage of pupils with FSM attaining level 4+ at Key Stage 2 in both English and maths improved in 2012 to 60%. Results for some ethnic minority ethnic groups were mixed, with Pakistani pupils at Level 4+ up by more than those of White British pupils. Black Caribbean pupils showed a slight increase at Level 4+ but the results of Mixed White-Black Caribbean pupils decreased. More Pakistani and Mixed White-Black Caribbean pupils made expected progress in English than White British pupils.

### **Key Stage 4 (Ages 14 – 16)**

- 3.7. Whilst Key Stage 4 Results in 2012 for pupils achieving 5+ A-C including English and Maths were the same as the preceding year and were well above the national average, the percentage of pupils with FSM achieving 5+ A-C including English and Maths fell in 2012 to 29.6% from 34.1%. Non-FSM pupils saw a slight increase and the gap increased. FSM pupils had lower results than national, while the results of those without FSM were higher than national. The KS4 gap was the widest of statistical neighbours and the widest nationally.
- 3.8. The results of minority ethnic groups were varied: At 5+ A- C including English and Maths, results of white British and Pakistani pupils both fell by 1% while those of

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<sup>22</sup> *Premium Policies: What schools and teachers believe will improve standards for poorer pupils and those in low attaining schools*, The Sutton Trust, January 2012.

Mixed White-Black Caribbean and Black Caribbean pupils increased by 8% and 7% respectively. Progress in maths was above national for all ethnic groups. In English, progress was below the national average for all groups except White British pupils.

## Literacy

- 3.9. Evidence shows that literacy is one of the founding skills from early years onwards and that it is critical to learning and attainment in all other areas of the curriculum. Poor literacy rates are also one of the determining factors for under attainment. One of the ways in which the Government is encouraging schools to improve literacy is through phonics programmes. Buckinghamshire's attainment performance figures are poor for phonics.

*“ the biggest impact of socio-economic disadvantage is nothing to do with money but to do with the fact that for example the linguistic experience that you have as a young child is much more limited. The fact is if you work in an area that is socio-economically deprived as a teacher the five years olds will be arriving in school with a far smaller vocabulary than children from middle class areas”*

Professor Dylan William, oral evidence received 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

### Recommendation Five: Improving Literacy

We recommend that the Cabinet Member undertake a review on how to improve the performance of phonics and to consider methods to achieve higher levels of literacy for deprived pupils at early years and primary school levels.

- 3.10. We recommend that a review of the possible reasons for the poor performance in phonics be undertaken to identify the possible reasons for this and consider the best ways of achieving higher levels of literacy for economically and socially challenged pupils at early years and primary school levels, including consideration of the promotion of standardised synthetic phonics programmes standards in schools as a more systematically applied approach.
- 3.11. In 1998 Tower Hamlets ranked as one of lowest-performing authorities in the country for educational attainment; 10 years later their results were above average across the board and, for the poorest children among the very best. During the Inquiry we spoke to Diana Warne - Head of Secondary Learning and Achievement Education Social Care and Wellbeing London Borough Tower Hamlets and visited schools in Tower Hamlets to see speak to school leaders and teachers. Tower Hamlets has a high portion of pupils from a Bengali Muslim background.



Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee meet with Jemima Reilly – Head Teacher of Morpeth School, Tower Hamlets

- 3.12. Key points that we learnt from the Tower Hamlets experience were that strong links between community and schools and parental engagement can be very important, along with clear leadership from the local authority and a strong and robust relationship with schools. Above all, the Tower Hamlets experience demonstrates what can be achieved when there is a strong commitment within schools and the local authority, focused on raising attainment for underprivileged pupils, matched with using the additional resources (eg the Pupil Premium grant) in ways which are evidenced to maximise impact.

### **Parents as Teachers**

- 3.13. Evidence shows that parental engagement and understanding can be a significant underlying feature influencing a child's attainment from early years onwards and supporting and engaging with parents can be hugely beneficial. During the Inquiry we interviewed Janice Saunders and Jennifer Gamble, Head Teacher of Ash Hill Primary School in High Wycombe, who told us about the Parents as First Teachers Programme. Mrs Gamble has had experience of having Parents As First Teachers Project Workers attached to her school and working within her school community. You can find out more about the evidence submitted by Parents As First Teachers [here](#).
- 3.14. We believe that the proposals put forward by Parents As First Teachers be noted and evaluated for feasibility and cost all the evidence base for longer term impact on attainment (as well as social, economic and financial benefits).

#### **Recommendation Six: The Role of Parents in Education**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member develop a programme to engage and further involve parents in the education of their children, with a particular focus on supporting parents of the most vulnerable children.

## **4. The School System**

- 4.1. In Buckinghamshire there is a mixed economy of primary schools and different modes of secondary schools, including Grammar schools and community schools. Many of the secondary schools in Buckinghamshire are now Academies, which have greater autonomy than maintained schools.
- 4.2. Grammar schools are state secondary schools, which select their pupils by means of an examination taken by children at age eleven, known as the "Eleven Plus". Pupils who pass the exam may go to a local grammar school, while pupils who may not go to a local "secondary modern school".
- 4.3. Similar systems exist in Buckinghamshire, Rugby and Stratford districts of Warwickshire, the Salisbury district of Wiltshire, Gloucester and Stroud in Gloucestershire and most of Lincolnshire, Kent, Reading and Medway.

## Grammar Schools

- 4.4. Grammar schools are academically orientated secondary schools. In Buckinghamshire, grammar schools are selective and pupils may gain a place at a grammar school by passing an “eleven plus” exam, in a similar way to the Tripartite system that used to operate throughout England and Wales in the 1960s. Selection exams take place at the beginning of Year 6 for children aged ten to eleven and the results of these exams form the basis of the selection process.
- 4.5. There are a relatively low number of FSM pupils entering Buckinghamshire grammar schools. Given that many grammar schools often offer higher aspirations for academic attainment, it may be self-evident that selection at the age of eleven may disadvantage higher attaining FSM pupils who have not yet been able to “catch up” with their non-FSM counterparts, or where there are existing low aspirations, especially where more privileged pupils from private schools are able to take up places.
- 4.6. Preparation for the examination is limited in the county’s state primary schools where a strict procedure must be adhered to. Private schools, however, seem to have more scope in their preparations. We have heard in evidence that there are a significant number of children who take the test who attend independent schools and that independent schools are allowed to practise the eleven plus exam technique to prepare their pupils for the exam much more than state schools.
- 4.7. During the Inquiry we interviewed Professor Anna Vignoles, co-researcher and author of *Poor Grammar – Entry into Grammar Schools for disadvantaged pupils in England*<sup>23</sup>. In concordance with the Sutton Trust recommendations in *Poor Grammar*, we would like to see a higher proportion of FSM gaining entry to grammar school, so that FSM pupils with academic potential may benefit from their school of choice, where they have the academic ability. We have recommended that the Cabinet Member encourage Buckinghamshire primary schools to provide targeted learning support in order to enable high achieving pupils from deprived background to access grammar schools, to raise aspirations for FSM pupils.
- 4.8. School performance data seems to suggest that, on average, schools with relatively small numbers of pupils eligible for FSM have wider gaps and schools with a large cohort of FSM pupils<sup>24</sup>. This may be partly because the larger amount of Pupil Premium allocation allows them to use these extra resources in a more strategic or more targeted ways to narrow the gap. It may also present a challenge to schools to

*“Primary schools could do more to encourage their high achieving children to apply to grammar schools in selective areas, and develop partnerships with grammar schools”*

**The Sutton Trust**

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<sup>23</sup> Cribb, J., Professor Jesson, D., Sibieta, L., Skipp, A., and Professor Vignoles, A. (2013), *Poor Grammar: Entry into Grammar Schools for disadvantaged pupils in England*, Improving social mobility through education, The Sutton Trust, November, 2013

<sup>24</sup> Department for education performance tables, [www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/performance)

target resources specifically on socially and economically deprived pupils and to do so in such a way as to avoid ostracisation or stigmatisation the process.

- 4.9. From the evidence we have received it is evident that many schools do not target Pupil Premium resources specifically on FSM pupils, but rather on boosting attainment for pupils that need it, and this being the case, the larger cohort of FSM pupils within a school, the more likely it is that FSM pupils will benefit and therefore the more likely the gap will decrease. We have also recommend that the feasibility of establishing Learning Development Centres to offer targeted learning opportunities for parents and children located in areas accessible to economically disadvantaged families be explored, to raise aspirations for areas with higher relative levels of economic and social deprivation.

**Recommendation Seven: High Achieving Economically Disadvantaged**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member encourage Buckinghamshire primary schools to provide targeted learning support in order to enable high achieving pupils from deprived background to access grammar schools.

*“We are using the grant to partially fund the appointment of an inclusion manager whose remit includes gifted and talented”.*

*Janice Freeman\_ - Head Teacher, King’s Wood School*

## 5. Guidance to Schools

- 5.1. To hone resources effectively to maximise the impact on raising the attainment of the most economically challenged pupils schools need to know what works, and more precisely, what works in Buckinghamshire and what works in each school context. What will work in one context may well work in another, or it may not, depending on the local context and how it is applied. We believe that in order to know what works, schools need to be supported to apply a more systematically applied evaluation based approach. In addition to national guidance and schools own practice, the local authority and the Bucks Learning Trust can support them in this endeavour.

*“I think that teachers should be routinely involved into inquiry into their own practice about what works well for their students. I would encourage this culture of Inquiry in schools; that teachers are always enquiring and always trying to work out if what they are doing differently is working or not. That culture of inquiry will make a big difference. It creates a lot of energy and new ideas and also creates some discipline by saying; hang on, this does not seem to be working, we need to try something different”.*

Professor Dylan Wiliam oral evidence received 10<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

## Identifying Needs

- 5.2. To hone resources effectively, it is important to consider the evidence based needs of the most challenged groups of pupils. Schools should consider *who* those pupils are and the barriers to learning and achievement, and specifically identify their needs to bridge the achievement gap.
- 5.3. The target group of pupils may be pupils in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) and Children Looked After (CLA), as this is the measure used by the Government to measure the attainment gap and to allocate Pupil Premium funding, but it may be worth considering if these are the only definition of needs that the school wishes to use. FSM may or may not be the best way of measuring challenge and need within a school. Moreover, a narrow definition of need may preclude projects which can boost attainment through inclusion or challenging underlying barriers to learning. We suggest that the key thing is that spending is focused in a considered and deliberate way to raise attainment for the most challenged pupils.

*“Where schools spent the Pupil Premium funding successfully to improve achievement, they...thoroughly analysed which pupils were underachieving, particularly in English and mathematics, and why”<sup>25</sup>*  
**OfStEd**

- 5.4. Having identified the attainment gaps of different pupils, further analysis can help to identify what the educational attainment gaps for each group of pupils are. This can be used to identify, evidence and prioritise the options for resource allocation. We suggest that it is important to periodically test assumptions and knowledge about needs to make sure the assessments are based upon evidence of impact assessment. Attainment data for different groups of children in each school can be accessed and benchmarked via the RAISEonline website the Dashboard and the Fischer Family Trust.

**RAISEonline** - [www.raiseonline.org](http://www.raiseonline.org)

**Ofsted Dashboard** - <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk>

**Fischer Family Trust** - [www.fft.org.uk](http://www.fft.org.uk)

## Identification and Selection

- 5.5. Identification of what interventions to maximise raised attainment starts with evaluation of impact of different approaches. It is when teachers and school leaders start a project with the mind frame that they are evaluators of their impact that the students gain the most benefit.

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<sup>25</sup> The Pupil Premium: How schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement, February 2013

- 5.6. Identifying the right projects in which to invest is critical to getting the highest measurable impact. The types of projects funded in schools varies enormously, but it is important to remember the designated purpose of the Pupil Premium grant is to narrow the attainment gap and that Pupil Premium funding should be prioritised for funding for that purpose.

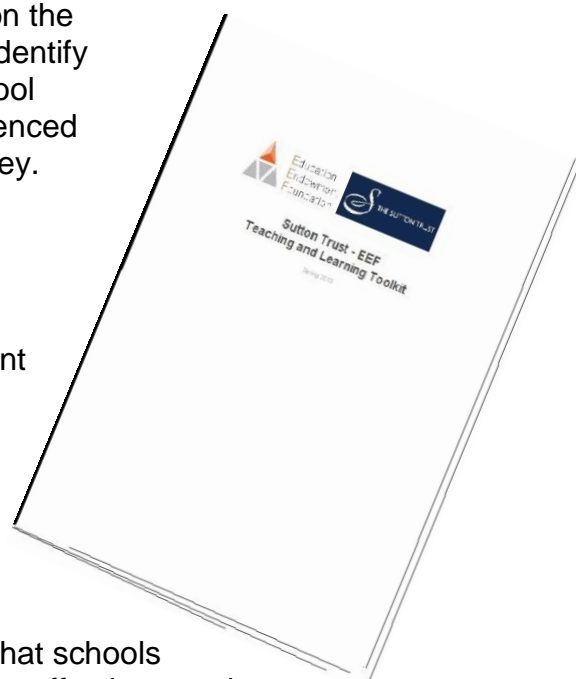
*“there is a danger that schools may spend the resources on well-intentioned programmes that, in practice, have not been proven to raise attainment. For example, a recent survey of teachers found that 15 per cent would prioritise the money on reducing class sizes and 8 per cent would spend it on additional teaching assistants (Sutton Trust 2012). However, trials of both these programmes show they have little impact on pupil attainment.”*

(Higgins et al 2012a)<sup>26</sup>

- 5.7. Identifying and prioritising educational interventions can involve a consideration and analysis of who the most disadvantaged groups are, their specific educational “gaps” and the identification of options. The next stage can be identifying the specific educational attainment needs of targeted pupils, (e.g. FSM pupils), through an analysis of where those pupils’ attainment is behind the average or areas where those pupils do not have equal access to specific or general educational resources or experiences. One approach is to look at comparative data for the attainment of targeted pupils compared with the average by subject area.
- 5.8. Having identified the needs, it is good practice to examine different learning programmes and approaches proven to have impact on the specific attainment needs identified. This will help to identify options for programmes and activities and enable school leaders to select the best options based upon an evidenced based assessment of effectiveness and value for money.

## The Teaching and Learning Toolkit

- 5.9. During the Inquiry, Robbie Coleman, Research and Communications Manager at the Education Endowment Foundation, was interviewed. The Education Endowment Foundation, in association with The Sutton Trust, have produced a Teaching and Learning Toolkit, which can be used by schools to inform best practice nationally on the use of Pupil Premium and is available free on their website<sup>27</sup>.
- 5.10. The Education Endowment Foundation recommends that schools consider local and national best practice to evaluate the effectiveness in narrowing the attainment gap, considering internal data, context and challenges, external data (the Teaching and Learning Toolkit is one way of benchmarking this) and qualitatively assessing its effectiveness in the context of the school. Attainment data, alongside qualitative teacher evaluation, should be used to assess impact.



<sup>26</sup> Clifton, J., and Cook, W. (September 2012), *A long division: Closing the attainment gap in England's secondary schools*

<sup>27</sup> <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit>



5.11. The Sutton Trust's *Toolkit of Strategies to Improve Learning Summary for Schools Spending the Pupil Premium* and [The Teaching and Learning Toolkit](http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit) was published by the Education Endowment Foundation and the Sutton Trust (May 2013).

5.12. For an online version of the Toolkit see:

<http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit>

*“Where schools spent the Pupil Premium funding successfully to improve achievement, they ...drew on research evidence (such as the Sutton Trust toolkit) and evidence from their own and others’ experience to allocate the funding to the activities that were most likely to have an impact on improving achievement”<sup>28</sup>*

**OfStEd**

5.13. Consideration should be given to the relative success of programmes, projects and approaches in the school in previous academic years and consider their impact against meeting the identified educational needs. Having a good system of project evaluation can be very helpful in identifying what works and what might be approached differently.

## **Comparative Approaches**

5.14. National and international studies are useful sources to identify the highest impact approaches and to test local practice. A lot of these studies are based upon meta-analysis which can provide statistically significant analysis of the effectiveness of different approaches. Meta-analysis is a method of combining the findings of similar studies to provide a combined quantitative synthesis. The advantages of meta-analysis are that it draws from a range of studies and should therefore produce more widely applicable or more generalisable results. In education research this can be valuable, as the results from small studies may not on their own be statistically significant. For example, the results of different but comparable interventions to improve low attaining students’ learning in mathematics are combined so as to identify clearer evidence about which interventions work and more effective approaches for the highest impact.

**“Our argument is that so long as you are aware of the limits of the inferences drawn, then the approach has value. We suggest that this provides the best evidence we have so far, particularly where we have no studies providing direct comparisons”<sup>29</sup>.**

***The Teaching and Learning Toolkit – Technical Appendices, The Sutton Trust***

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<sup>28</sup> The Pupil Premium: How schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement, Ofsted, February 2013

<sup>29</sup> Steve, H., Dimitra, K., and Robert, C. (2012). *The Teaching and Learning Toolkit – Technical Appendices*, CEM Centre, Durham university, The Sutton Trust – EEF, July, 2012, <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

## Ash Hill Primary School

“Our decisions are driven by data, which is used to identify pupils’ learning needs. This is not always about ‘under performance’ in relation to national expectations, but about all children meeting their potential. E.g. 1-1 tuition may be used for accelerating children to Level 5 or even Level 6 at KS2.

Academic achievement is our priority for spending Pupil Premium Grant, as we believe this is the most important factor in enabling the future success of our children and helping them out of the poverty trap and benefits cycle which is prevalent for many families. We do of course believe in enrichment and in providing our pupils with a range of experiences, but we generally look to other funding streams to enable this”.

### Pupil Premium Reports

- 5.15. We suggest that schools should identify evidence of impact for each approach before allocating the grant, and evaluate the best projects and approaches based on comparative evidence.
- 5.16. One way to do this is for Head Teachers to prepare a brief report which shows how the areas of attainment need are identified, how the different possible projects / approaches for each were identified and how the best project and approach are evaluated against evidence and chosen.
- 5.17. This report may be for consideration, comment and review by the Head Teacher, a staff meeting and School Governor meetings. It is a statutory requirement for schools to publish how they spend the Pupil Premium, so such a report may also be published on the school website alongside, to help publicise how the Pupil Premium programmes have been identified and how the Pupil Premium budget has been allocated accordingly.

### Questions for School Leaders

#### **Checklist:**

- ✓ **Who are the key groups of pupils** who are identified as challenged / disadvantaged, including specifically, FSM pupils?
- ✓ **What are the educational attainment gaps** for these identified groups of pupils at different key stages? (what specific areas of educational attainment are these groups of pupils performing less well than the average for that key stage in the school?)
- ✓ **What different specific options have been identified** to boost attainment in these areas for each group of pupils identified? What is the evidence for highest impact?

- ✓ **To what extent are these specific options measurable?** To what extent can they give rise to projects that can be designed with outputs and outcomes that can be effectively measured?
- ✓ **What is the impact?** What specific impact criteria have been identified to compare and prioritise each of these options? (eg the ***potential gain*** – the maximum approximate advantage over the course of a school year that an ‘average’ student might expect if this strategy was adopted), and specific defined educational attainment indicators such as tested evaluation or assessment).
- ✓ **What is the unit cost of each of the options?** eg how much will the project cost in respect of staff time and resources, in comparison to as if the project was not being delivered (including by exception and where appropriate, any significant direct savings).
- ✓ **What are the opportunity costs?** eg externalised financial and non-financial costs of the project, such as the loss of exposure to a mainstream classroom for a pupil receiving intensive tuition during class time.
- ✓ **What is the overall cost benefit assessment?** Weighing the costs against the benefits, how do you score and prioritise the projects? (eg scored out of ten).

## **An Analysis and Challenge Toolkit for Schools**

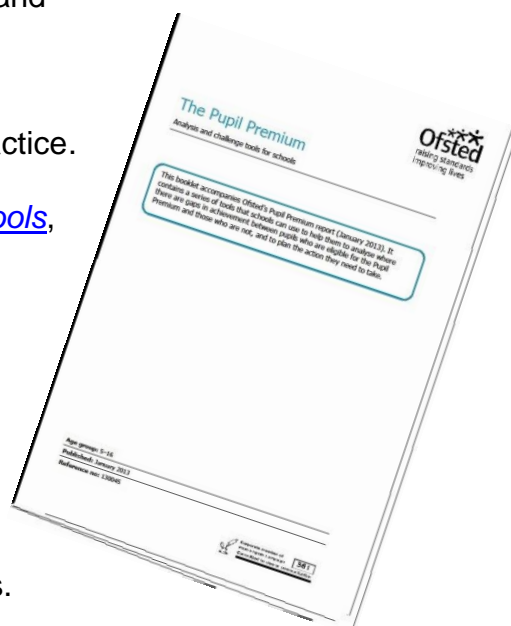
- 5.18. When the options for narrowing the gap programmes and activities have been identified, options evaluated, selected and budget allocated, the selected educational can be scoped around the selected options. This could include a brief description of what the intervention is, what it will be called, the aims and objectives of the project, a description of the main activities involved and what learning outcomes for the project are anticipated. Scoping should enable a more tangible reference for what the project or intervention is and what it aims to achieve and is an opportunity to discuss the project design with key staff involved in delivery. Educational projects and interventions vary enormously in their size and scope, from one-off funding for a particular individual to a whole programme for a significantly sized group of pupils, but in principle, we believe all interventions should include some methodologically planned approach, albeit commensurate to the size and scope of the project or projects at hand.
- 5.19. Planning educational projects and interventions, whatever their scope, can be critical to focusing resources to make a measurable impact. We suggest that all such educational interventions should include a minimum consideration of their aims and objectives, how the project will be delivered and what measurable indicators and outcomes there may be to see if it was effective. There are various approaches and methodologies used for project planning educational projects. In this report we are not assuming any particular methodology or framework, but are highlighting some particular planning stages which could be considered in planning. The level and detail of project planning will of course depend on the nature of the projects, but we suggest they should always include consideration of key elements. The purpose of planning is to make sure that the aims of the projects are understood, that all of the

necessary resources are co-ordinated and to provide a design framework that can be measured and evaluated through to the end of the project.

5.20. As a minimum, we suggest that narrowing the Gap / Pupil Premium plans include the following key elements:

1. **design** of the projects with specific aims and objectives, measurable performance measures, resource identification, timescales and risks for each project
2. **designation** of a project manager and project staff and other resources
3. **description** of the delivery of the project and/or key milestones
4. **evaluation** to measure impact and inform future practice.

5.21. [The Pupil Premium - Analysis and challenge tools for schools](#), published by Ofsted in January 2013 contains a series of tools that schools can use to help them to analyse where there are gaps in achievement between pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium and those who are not, and to plan the action they need to take.



5.22. Given the differing contexts and challenges of Buckinghamshire Schools, we believe it would be useful to schools to build on the national guidance with a Buckinghamshire analysis and challenge toolkit for schools.

### Recommendation Eight: An Analysis and Challenge Toolkit for Schools

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to develop guidance and online toolkits for schools on:

- project identification and assessment of educational programmes and interventions targeted at the needs of pupils most in need, and
- an evaluation framework template as a practical tool for assessing the impact of narrowing the gap projects.

## Planning the Approach

5.23. In conjunction to the guidance and templates available to help identify and evaluate educational interventions, we suggest that schools also use standardised templates designed for the project planning of interventions. We believe that this could, in many cases, help to make sure that activities are planned around their specific educational objectives and help to structure the projects in a consistent and methodical way and in a way which helps develop measurable effectiveness, which can be useful to inform future practice. Evaluation of impact should be used to inform future practice to make sure the highest impact interventions are being funded and assumptions about this tested.

### Questions for School Leaders Checklist:

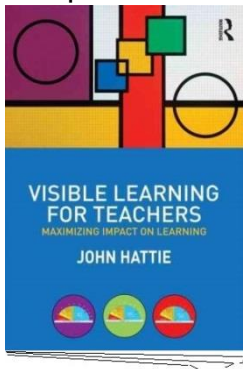
- ✓ Design of educational projects with specific aims and objectives, performance measures, resource identification, timescales and risks
- ✓ Designation of project manager and project staff and other resources
- ✓ Description of the delivery of the project and indicators
- ✓ Evaluation of impact to inform future practice to make sure the highest impact interventions are being funded.

## 6. Examples from Practice

- 6.1. Sharing best practice between schools is crucial to boost the teaching practice and leadership skills in schools. We suggest that, after there has been a consideration of the needs of disadvantaged pupils to narrow the attainment gap, there should be a consideration of the options to meet that need, for example, by identifying at least three different projects or approaches for each identified need. Examples from practice can help to inform a review of the options. The different ways in which the Pupil Premium grant is spent vary considerably. The *Toolkit of Strategies to Improve Learning – Summary for Schools Spending the Pupil Premium* and [The Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#) published by the Education Endowment Foundation and the Sutton Trust (May 2013) provide examples of ways in which schools are spending the grant, which can be used to consider different approaches. See: <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit>

**“Smaller classes, uniforms, and primary homework among the least effective ways of boosting school performance”<sup>30</sup>**  
**OfStEd**

- 6.2. Ofsted also cite examples in the publication [The Pupil Premium: How schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement](#). In the autumn 2012 Ofsted inspectors visited 68 primary and secondary schools to see how effectively they were spending the Pupil Premium funding to maximise achievement. The report draws together some of the effective practice that inspectors saw, accompanied by a set of documents to help schools to analyse gaps in achievement and plan their actions effectively.

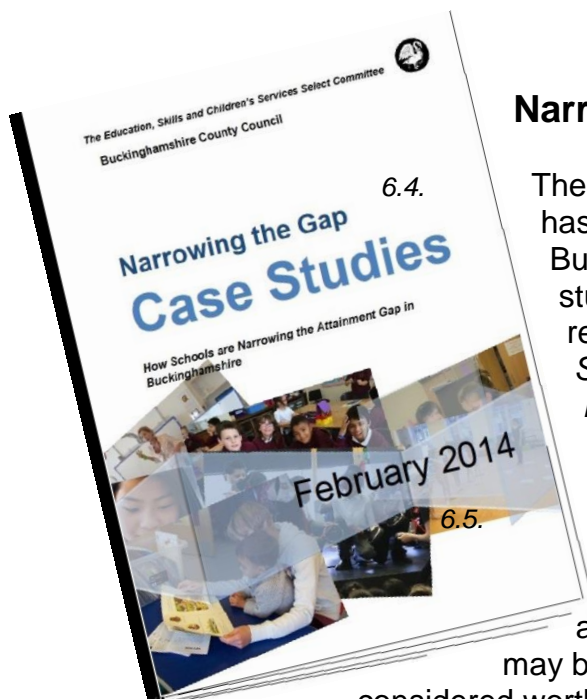


### Visible Learning

Professor John Hattie has published in-depth analysis and meta studies on educational methodologies and correlated attainment outcomes. His work includes, notably, *Visible Learning: a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement* (Hattie, J. (2009), London, Routledge) and *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning* (John Hattie, Routledge, London, 2009).

- 6.3. Watch Professor John Hattie talking about what works and what doesn't work in educational intervention based on the results of his meta study analysis:  
Part 1: [www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=sng4p3Vsu7Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=sng4p3Vsu7Y)  
Part 2: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pD1DFTNQf4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pD1DFTNQf4)

<sup>30</sup> The Sutton Trust, May 2011, [www.suttontrust.com/news/news/smaller-classes-uniforms-and-primary-homework-among](http://www.suttontrust.com/news/news/smaller-classes-uniforms-and-primary-homework-among)



## Narrowing the Gap in Buckinghamshire

The Narrowing the Gap Select Committee Inquiry has also examined examples of local practice in Buckinghamshire schools and these case studies have been published in a related report: *Narrowing the Gap Case Studies: How Schools are Narrowing the Gap in Buckinghamshire*. For a copy of this report, please visit [www.buckscc.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/scrutiny)

Approaches to narrowing the gap in Buckinghamshire vary widely, with a broad mixture of academic and non-academic actions funded. The impact of some things may be more difficult to measure but are still considered worthwhile by the schools running them.

### The Disraeli School and Children's Centre

6.6. During the Inquiry we interviewed Mrs Jatinder Virk - Head Teacher, and Ann Beaton-Chairman of the Governing Body, at the Disraeli School and Children's Centre. They told us about some of the activities they are funding through the Pupil Premium grant. At the Disraeli School and Children's Centre they focused Pupil Premium funding on three key areas: attainment, interest/experiences/nurturing talent and parental engagement/well being.

6.7. The Disraeli School and Children's Centre have extended their previous practice but revised what they do after monitoring and evaluation. Narrowing the gap / Pupil Premium activities include:

- School Website/APP to improve parental involvement.
- TV/Radio giving confidence in speaking and listening and motivating children across all curriculum aspects.
- Ability setting from Year 2 upwards for English, Maths and Science.
- 1:1 booster for individuals dependent on needs ie Talkboost, Numeracy and Literacy catch ups.
- 1:1 Reading.
- Support for homework before school/lunchtimes.
- Parent classes in English, Maths, ICT and Parenting Courses.
- Paying for residentials, supporting AGT children, Clubs after school and weekends.



Music lessons at Disraeli School

## Ash Hill Primary School

- 6.8. At Ash Hill Primary School they employ the following strategies to narrow the gap:
- Employing a full-time Inclusion Manager with responsibility for all additional support provided to children and their families and for the quality of Read Write including teaching and the intervention work carried out by Teaching Assistants.
  - Employment of a Reading Recovery Teacher (part-funded by Buckinghamshire County Council), to provide one-to-one support and accelerate progress.
  - Release time for senior leaders to implement academic mentoring meetings with children in Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, in order to provide more effective feedback.
  - Teaching Assistant time to provide small group Read Write including sessions, one-to-one Read Write support, plus additional interventions, eg Rainbow Road.
  - One-to-one tutoring for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils.
  - Additional teaching staff to facilitate smaller groups for literacy and mathematics lessons, plus additional booster groups.
  - Recruitment and retention of the highest calibre of teaching staff.



*Study Group at Ash Hill Primary School*

## The Beaconsfield School

- 6.9. The Beaconsfield School received £27,652 of Pupil Premium funding in 2011 / 2012. Their objectives in spending the grant are:
- To increase the number of students making 3 and 4 levels of progress in Maths and English.
  - To focus on ensuring that students reach the challenging targets set for them by the school, by creating opportunities to learn beyond the classroom and outside their normal subject areas.
  - To increase the number of A-B grades for more able Pupil Premium students by removing the barriers to learning, creating opportunities to develop study skills in supportive calm environment.
  - To ensure that the vast majority of students who the school receives the Pupil Premium grant for make at least as good progress as their peers.
  - To create enrichment opportunities for students to help widen their experiences and their ambition.

***“Sharing best practice between schools is crucial to boost the teaching practice and leadership skills of those in the target schools”<sup>31</sup>***

**The Sutton Trust**

<sup>31</sup> *Premium Policies: What schools and teachers believe will improve standards for poorer pupils and those in low-attaining schools*, The Sutton Trust 2012

6.10. Their programmes include:

**Curriculum support** - Easter revision classes, Saturday morning classes and after school classes for Year 10 and Year 11 students. An extended curriculum for Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 students to study BTEC in Work skills. Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy with specialist teaching in small groups for Year 11 students. Year 8 students were enrolled on the accelerated reading programme as part of a raising standards in literacy programme.

**Student Well-being** - A breakfast club providing free breakfast for all FSM students. Financial assistance for enrichment day trips. extra-curricular music lessons for gifted and talented students,.

**SEN Nurture** - Working in conjunction with The Lemonwedge, the school's art therapy department, the SENCO and non-teaching pastoral leader for KS3 provide additional support for their social, behavioural and learning needs. This takes the form of 1:1 counselling and group sessions. A motivational course was held for Year 9 boys, run by an external provider.

6.11. For more details of narrowing the gap and Pupil Premium programmes in Buckinghamshire see *Narrowing the Gap Case Studies: How Schools are Narrowing the Gap in Buckinghamshire*.

## 7. Evaluation & Impact

7.1. Evaluation of narrowing the gap programmes and projects are essential to understanding what works and what is less successful in raising attainment and making sure that resources are allocated effectively. It is when teachers and school leaders *start* a project with the mind frame that they are evaluators of their impact that the students gain the most benefit. Evaluation of impact should inform practice. We suggest that projects should be evaluated at least at the beginning, middle and end of the project; that is an evaluation of the project itself, what it aims to achieve, how the project is being delivered against its objectives and at the end, an evaluation of how well the project achieved its objectives.

*"I would be asking up front – what is the starting position of this student, what are the anticipated success criteria (relative to this starting point), and then evaluate the process of moving from the starting to the end point – and then asking the two key questions: a. What evidence is provided to demonstrate impact of the program/teachers on the students gain, and b. What is the school doing in light of this evidence? This feedback loop WHILE the programme is working is the key – the response to intervention model, the degree of implementation model, the teacher as evaluator"*

Professor John Hattie

7.2. The need for proper evaluation is something that is worth considering when designing a project; making sure that the project is not only framed around the identified needs of the pupils, but designed with tangible outputs and outcomes that can, as far as possible, be objectively measured. It is not always possible to measure every worthwhile enterprise, but we suggest that the extent to which it is

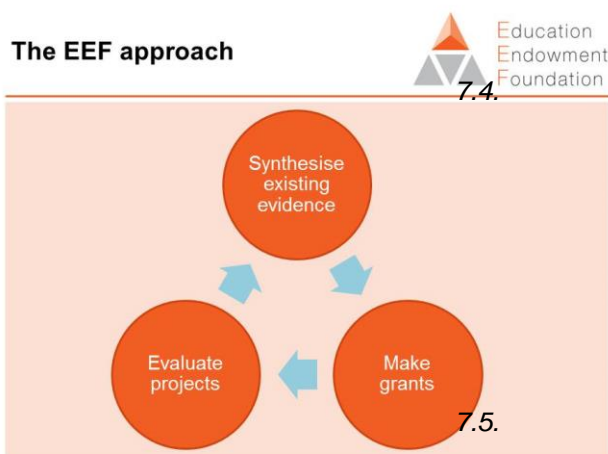


possible to design a project with outputs and outcomes that can be measured is an important consideration.

*“Where schools spent the Pupil Premium funding successfully to improve achievement, they ...were able, through careful monitoring and evaluation, to demonstrate the impact of each aspect of their spending on the outcomes for pupils”<sup>32</sup>*

**OfStEd**

- 7.3. There are different methodologies for project evaluation and schools use different evaluation frameworks. As a minimum, we suggest that an evaluation should include consideration of the original aims and objectives of the project, the extent to which the project has achieved its defined output targets, an impact assessment, including any other impacts (positive and negative) and an evaluation of any outcomes so far.



## Mid-term Evaluation

The mid-term project review is an opportunity to consider how the project is running. This will include an assessment of progress against key milestones, a general overview of progress and, if possible and appropriate, an interim measure of the pupil's attainment progress.

A mid-term evaluation will help to assess how well the project is running and the progress so far and help to identify if any changes are required to be made in the approach. Whether the progress so far is on target, above target or below expectations, it is a good opportunity to reflect upon the reasons why. It is also a good opportunity to reassess the risks to the project and ways in which these could be mitigated before completion.

## Final Evaluation

- 7.6. Evaluation is an important aspect of any intervention, no matter what the nature or scope or length of an activity. At the end of the project or activity it is important to make sure that there is a planned review and evaluation, involving those involved in managing the project and any other relevant persons involved in its management and governance. Where feasible and appropriate, this activity could also involve the pupils or parents.



<sup>32</sup> *The Pupil Premium: How schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement*, Ofsted, February 2013

- 7.7. We suggest that there should be evaluation for each activity and each project where there is an overall programme of activities, as well as an overall evaluation of the programme. Evaluation needs to consider to what extent the project has achieved its planned objectives, as well as any other positive or negative outcomes and indicators. This should include reference back to the specific planned objectives, as well as an overall assessment.
- 7.8. It is important that evaluation is as objective as possible, as this will make it clearer what the project has achieved and make the evaluation more useful, particularly in informing future programmes and activities. If possible, some kind of external review process may be useful and at the very least, evaluation should include someone who was not directly involved. The most important thing is that there has been a clear attempt to set ambitious yet realistic objectives to plan the use of resources around these and that there is an objective assessment of how well this has worked.
- 7.9. It is important that evaluation is based, as far as possible, on objective criteria, rather than relying on value judgements. This comes back to how well-honed the project targets were at the beginning. Ideally, any project will have sufficiently ambitious objectives that the project will not achieve all of the objectives set at the beginning.
- 7.10. It is for this reason we have recommended An Analysis and Challenge Toolkit for Schools and an evaluation framework template, as practical tools for the assessment of narrowing the gap educational projects and interventions, including a framework for evidence based quantitative and qualitative assessment against the project objectives, assessment of overall objectives, assessment of unplanned outputs and outcomes and external review.

**Recommendation Eight: An Analysis and Challenge Toolkit for Schools**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to develop guidance and online toolkits for schools on:

- project identification and assessment of educational programmes and interventions targeted at the needs of pupils most in need, and
- an evaluation framework template as a practical tool for assessing the impact of narrowing the gap projects.

- 7.11. [\*The Pupil Premium - Analysis and challenge tools for schools\*](#), published by Ofsted in January 2013 contains tools that schools can use to help evaluate projects.

**Questions for School Leaders**

**Checklist:**

- ✓ Planned objectives and indicators to evaluate against?
- ✓ Evaluation of delivery against objectives and indicators?
- ✓ Final evaluation of effectiveness to inform future practice?

## Research and Evaluation of Best Practice

- 7.12. We would like to see a greater emphasis upon evidenced based practice to find out more about what narrowing the gap strategies and programmes have the highest impact and we would like to see this approach fostered from the centre. Funding from the Department for Education, the Education Endowment Foundation and other bodies is interim intently available for this and these bodies also help to focus on scientifically controlled peer reviewed studies, which could feed in to local and national knowledge and practice.
- 7.13. We recommend that the Council and Buckinghamshire Learning Trust apply for funding through the Education Endowment Foundation for an independently peer reviewed evaluated study approach for a project to narrowing the education attainment gap across Buckinghamshire and share this best practice across schools in Buckinghamshire.

### **Recommendation Nine: Researching and Evaluating what Works**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member apply to the Education Endowment Foundation for funding to undertake an independent peer review of narrowing the gap projects in Buckinghamshire and that this report be shared for best practice.

<http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/apply-for-funding/research-use-round/>

## 8. Governance

- 8.1. We believe that school governing bodies should be directly involved in narrowing the gap strategies and the challenge and evaluation of Pupil Premium funded programmes. School governors are key to school leadership and accountability for driving up performance of the most challenged pupils to narrow the attainment gap.
- 8.2. School governors play a central role in:
- driving school improvement,
  - driving up attainment of underachieving, deprived and challenged pupils
  - effective budget allocation, including the Pupil Premium grant
  - contributing to school policy development and review
  - monitoring of educational outcomes
  - evaluation of educational programmes and specific projects, including narrowing the gap and Pupil Premium strategies and activities
  - providing constructive challenge and accountability.
- 8.3. We believe that it is important that school governors are able to take a strategic overview of how their school is narrowing the gap and to take an active role in the identification of the most effective Pupil Premium projects to raise attainment for the most challenged or deprived pupils. This includes a review of the evaluation and effectiveness of the narrowing the gap Pupil Premium programmes during and at the end of the academic year, to be able to steer the use of resources towards the most effective educational interventions and to take an evidenced based approach to deciding what works and what is less effective.

*“Where schools spent the Pupil Premium funding successfully to improve achievement, they ...thoroughly involved governors in the decision making and evaluation process”<sup>33</sup>*

**OfStEd**

- 8.4. A practical way of doing this, as a *minimum*, is for the Head Teacher to present a report to the whole school governing body at least twice a year on the Pupil Premium, in addition to detailed consideration by the relevant finance and curriculum sub-committees. A report before the beginning of the academic year could focus on the identification of the most challenged or deprived pupils towards whom the projects should be focused, the identification of the educational needs and the most effective educational intervention projects and methodologies. A report during the academic year could also provide an interim update to governors on the evaluation of progress and effectiveness of the programmes mid-year and a report at the end of the academic year could provide a review of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the programmes and inform future practice.
- 8.5. Although these are matters which may often be usefully referred for detailed consideration to committees of the school governing body, such as a sub-committee dealing with finance and a sub-committee dealing with attainment, we believe that it is important that the *whole* school governing body *also* takes an overview of narrowing the gap strategies, the allocation of the Pupil Premium grant and the effectiveness of the use of the grant.

#### **Recommendation Ten: Narrowing the Gap Reports to Governing Bodies**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to develop guidance for schools on the roles of governors in developing and implementing narrowing the gap projects, and evaluation of the effects of the Pupil Premium. This should include quarterly/annual reports on these topics to governing body meetings.

#### **How inspectors evaluate schools' use of the Pupil Premium:**

*“Members of the governing body are involved in making decisions on how to use the funding. Clear reports from the headteacher mean governors have an accurate understanding of the difference that the school's actions are making to pupils who attract Pupil Premium funding”.*

Chris Wood, Her Majesty's Inspector, Ofsted

- 8.6. We suggest that a lead school governor for narrowing the gap will help to reinforce focus on this issue within the governing body. It is recommended that school governing bodies consider appointing a Narrowing the Gap / Pupil Premium lead governor with special responsibility for oversight of the narrowing the gap strategies, programmes and performance for the school.

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<sup>33</sup> *The Pupil Premium: How schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement*, Ofsted, February 2013

***“The governors have appointed a pupil premium governor who meets regularly with the Headteacher and the pupil premium co-ordinator and then reports to full governing body. She is able to offer ideas and suggestions as well as hold the school to account in terms of impact”.***

**Janice Freeman - Headteacher, King’s Wood School**

#### **Recommendation Eleven: Lead Governor for Narrowing the Gap**

In order to raise the profile of narrowing the gap within schools, we recommend that school governing bodies consider appointing a lead governor with special responsibility for narrowing the gap and Pupil Premium.

- 8.7. To help reinforce school governors in their roles on the strategic direction, review, evaluation and constructive challenge, we propose that the training for governors through the Bucks Learning Trust training programmes be enhanced and built upon with specific focus on identification of needs and high impact interventions aimed at FSM pupils and on skills and approaches for the evaluation of impact, to make sure that the focus is on using limited resources on the most impact programmes, where the impact is evaluated and evidenced and focused upon the FSM pupil’s identified academic needs.

#### **Recommendation Twelve: Narrowing the Gap Training for School Leaders**

We recommend that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust to enhance training opportunities for school leaders on maximising narrowing the gap projects and Pupil Premium including strategic overview, project identification and budget allocation, mid-term review, and evaluation and assessment.

#### **Questions for School Leaders**

##### **Checklist:**

- ✓ report to the main school governing body for Pupil Premium project identification and grant allocation
- ✓ report to main school governing body on the evaluation of Pupil Premium programmes to help inform future practice
- ✓ training delivered to school governors on Pupil Premium identification and evaluation.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1. How schools are narrowing the gap is now part of the Ofsted Inspection regime. Ofsted have published reports on their findings of how schools are using the Pupil Premium to raise attainment for disadvantaged pupils, highlighting some key strengths and weaknesses. *The Pupil Premium: How schools are using the Pupil Premium funding to raise achievement for disadvantaged pupils*, published in September 2012 was based upon a survey of 262 school leaders. The follow up report, published in February 2013, was based upon Ofsted inspections into 68

primary and secondary schools in the autumn 2012. We have referenced some of the key findings in this report.

- 9.2. We have considered the overview of Pupil Premium programmes from the identification of needs, project identification and grant allocation, and evaluation and referenced key source documents and put forward recommendations to inform practice throughout this process.
- 9.3. In their key findings, Ofsted commented that “*Where schools spent the Pupil Premium funding successfully to improve achievement, they ...drew on research evidence (such as the Sutton Trust toolkit) and evidence from their own and others’ experience to allocate the funding to the activities that were most likely to have an impact on improving achievement*”. We have proposed that schools use the guidance on project identification and scoping for educational projects to schools as a practical tool for the assessment and identification of the most high impact educational projects and we have recommended that the Cabinet Member for Education ask the Bucks Learning Trust issue clear guidance to schools and develop an online toolkit.
- 9.4. Ofsted commented that “*Where schools were less successful in spending the funding, they ...had a lack of clarity about the intended impact of the spending*” and “*did not have a good performance management system for teaching assistants and other support staff*”. We have proposed that schools use an appropriately designed project plan to help plan and performance manage resources and effectiveness.
- 9.5. Ofsted said that “*School leaders, including governing bodies, should evaluate their Pupil Premium spending, avoid spending it on activities that have little impact on achievement for their disadvantaged pupils, and spend it in ways known to be most effective*”. We have proposed that schools use the published guidance and an evaluation framework to heed the assessment of Pupil Premium projects and that the Cabinet Member ask the Bucks Learning Trust issue clear guidance to schools and develop an online toolkit.
- 9.6. The toolkit could include:
  - templates and guidance for **project identification and scoping** for educational projects for the assessment and identification of the most high impact educational projects, including guidance on the scoping of the projects to help facilitate well honed, tangible projects and programmes, that are designed to be measured and assessed and which are focused upon the identified needs of identified groups of pupils,
  - appropriately designed **impact and monitoring** online tools and project plan templates as practical tools that schools can use to project-plan targeted educational interventions, and
  - **an evaluation framework** template, as practical tools for the assessment of narrowing the gap educational projects and interventions, including a framework for evidence based quantitative and qualitative assessment against the project objectives, assessment of overall objectives, assessment of unplanned outputs and outcomes and external review (Recommendation Eight).

- 9.7. In their report, Ofsted said that “*Where schools were less successful in spending the funding, they ...did not have governors involved in making decisions about the Pupil Premium, or challenging the way in which it was allocated*”<sup>34</sup>. We have proposed that all school governors have the opportunity to be involved and consider a pupil premium report at their main governing body, as well as their curriculum and finance sub-committees (and any other relevant subcommittees), at least twice annually (Recommendation Ten).
- 9.8. We have also proposed that the Council enhance training for school governors on their role in overseeing Pupil Premium in order to help re-enforce their role in providing strategic leadership and oversight (Recommendation Twelve).
- 9.9. During our research we have surveyed local school websites for their statements on how they are using the Pupil Premium grant. From September 2012 it has been a statutory requirement for schools to publish online:
- the amount of Pupil Premium received in the current year
  - details of how it is intended the allocation will be spent
  - details of how the previous year’s allocation was spent
  - the effect of this expenditure on the educational attainment of the disadvantaged pupils who attract it.
- 9.10. We noticed that whilst most schools now publish this information online, there are still some schools that appear not to do so. In addition to our main recommendations, we suggest that schools make sure that they publish how they are spending the Pupil Premium and review their statements to make sure that they include all of the above.
- 9.11. In conjunction with this report, we have also published more detailed findings of current practice in *Narrowing the Gap Case Studies: How Schools are Narrowing the Gap in Buckinghamshire*. We hope that these reports provide a useful reflection on current practice.
- 9.12. Further to this Inquiry and the submission of this report to the County Council’s executive Cabinet, the Select Committee intends to keep narrowing the attainment gap between FSM pupils and their peers high up on the agenda. The Education, Skills, and Children’s Services Select Committee will monitor the attainment gap each year to review the extent to which the attainment gap continues to narrow at Key Stages, through a detailed report which identifies a cross referenced breakdown of narrowing the gap performance by school, by gender, by ethnicity and any other stratifications which may be useful to inform understanding of the underlying determinants of performance.
- 9.13. We recognise that narrowing the gap is a priority for Buckinghamshire County Council and the Bucks Learning Trust, as well as a Government priority and a priority for many schools. Making this issue a priority for all schools, especially where there are significant barriers for the aspirations of FSM pupils, is an important factor and we urge the Council, the Bucks Learning Trust and the whole school community to

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<sup>34</sup> *The Pupil Premium: How schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement*, Ofsted, February 2013

maintain the attainment of socially and economically deprived children as a high priority from early years, through to pre-school, within primary and secondary schools, making sure that we use the resources we have to lift aspirations and attainment for the most challenged pupils to provide the best chances in the excellent education that already exists in Buckinghamshire for everybody.



## Witnesses

*The Select Committee Inquiry has received oral evidence from the following witnesses:*

Councillor Mr Mike Appleyard – Cabinet Member for Education and Skills  
Ann Beaton-Chairman of the Governing Body, The Disraeli School and Children's Centre  
Mr Robbie Coleman – Research and Communications Manager at the Education Endowment Foundation  
Debra Masters – Director, Visible Learning Plus, Cognition Education Ltd, Auckland New Zealand  
Professor Dylan Wiliam – Emeritus Professor of Education Assessment, the Institute of Education, University of London  
Mike Appleyard – Cabinet Member for Education and Skills  
Sue Imbriano – Strategic Director Children & Young People  
Chris Munday – Service Director, Learning, Skills and Prevention, Children & Young People, Buckinghamshire County Council  
Angela Wells – Head Teacher of the Buckingham School  
Hilda Stearn, Interim General Secretary, Wycombe Youth Action  
Bob Harrison – Delivery Director, Connexions  
John Everson – Commissioner, CYPS, BCC,  
Louise Chatterley – Operations Manager, Children's Centres (Chesham and High Wycombe), Buckinghamshire County Council  
Pam Curtis – Programme Manager, Children's Partnerships, Children & Young People's Service, Buckinghamshire County Council  
Angela Wells – Head Teacher Buckingham Secondary School  
The Buckinghamshire Primary Executive Board - Primary school Head Teachers  
The Buckinghamshire Association of Secondary Head Teachers (BASH)  
Robbie Coleman – Research Manager, The Education Endowment Foundation  
Mike Sheridan HMI, Ofsted  
Christine Raeside HMI, Ofsted  
Penny Todd – Head Teacher, the Pupil Referral Unit  
Mr Nick Gibb - MP  
Professor Anna Vignoles, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge (Member of the Education Endowment Foundations' Evaluation Advisory Group).  
Mrs Jatinder Virk - Head Teacher, The Disraeli School and Children's Centre  
Janice Saunders – Director, Parents as First Teachers  
Joy O'Neill (service children)  
David Hood – Headteacher, Cressex Community School, Buckinghamshire  
Jemima Reilly – Headteacher, Morpeth School, Portman Place, London  
Jennifer Gamble, Janice Saunders, Hilda Stearn, Helen Tyrrell and Angela Wells  
Sharon Cromie – Head Teacher, Wycombe High School

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to all of the schools in Buckinghamshire who have contributed evidence to the Select Committee Inquiry and Case Studies and especially those that have allowed us to come and see some of their Pupil Premium funded programmes in action. Thank you to all of the expert witnesses who have given their time to contribute their valued expertise.

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