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The Pupil Premium

How schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement

In autumn 2012, Her Majesty's Inspectors visited 68 primary and secondary schools to see how effectively they were spending their Pupil Premium funding to maximise achievement. This report draws together some of the effective practice that inspectors saw. It is accompanied by a set of documents to help schools to analyse gaps in achievement and plan their actions effectively.

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Foreword from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

The Pupil Premium was introduced by the Coalition Government in April 2011 to provide additional support for looked after children and those from low income families. The extra funding is made available to schools to help them narrow the attainment gap that still exists between pupils from disadvantaged and more affluent backgrounds.

The Government asked Ofsted to investigate how effectively schools were using the additional funding. Last September, we published our initial findings and followed this up with nearly 70 visits throughout the autumn term to a range of primary and secondary schools.

These visits showed that some schools are still not spending the Pupil Premium on interventions that are having any meaningful impact. These schools do not have good enough systems for tracking the spending of the additional funding or for evaluating the effectiveness of measures they have put in place in terms of improving outcomes. In short, they struggle to show that the funding is making any real difference.

There are, however, many schools that are getting this right, as this report explains and highlights. They have been able to tell my inspectors exactly where the Pupil Premium funding is being spent and can demonstrate how and why it is having an impact. The best school leaders know what they want to achieve from each of their interventions and they evaluate progress thoroughly to make sure these are working. They also have well thought-through plans for building on their success.

Crucially, many of these good schools are concentrating on the core areas of literacy and numeracy to break down the main barriers to accessing the full curriculum. They are also focusing on the key stages of a child's development in their school career.

The best primary schools are making sure that poorer children have all the help they need to grasp the basics of reading, writing and mathematics right at the start of their education so that they don't have to catch up later.

The best secondary schools are finding out where the basic skills gaps exist among eligible pupils as soon as they arrive in Year 7 and deploying their best teachers to help close these gaps. In particular, these schools are using the additional funding provided through the Pupil Premium to employ teachers with a good track record of working with disadvantaged pupils.

The Government has also made a substantial sum of money available for secondary schools to run summer school programmes aimed at helping children from more disadvantaged backgrounds make a smooth transition from primary school to the next phase of their education. Schools have been invited to bid for a share of this funding rather than the money being allocated according to the Pupil Premium formula. The scheme was introduced with the very best of intentions. However, our survey work suggests that take up has to date been patchy and there is evidence of poor targeting of places and weak liaison between secondary and primary schools.

Yet we know that the transition to secondary school is a key point in a child's education. We know that pupils who start secondary school working below Level 4 in English and mathematics often struggle to access the curriculum. We know that they typically do not make as much progress as their peers. And we know that more disadvantaged pupils are in this group.

Recently the Government announced that they will be giving extra funding to secondary schools to help to improve literacy levels in Year 7. We welcome this initiative. The Government should also consider diverting at least some of the summer school funding so that it goes directly to schools to pay for extra support for poorer pupils during this vital Year 7 period. This way, Ofsted will be able to properly monitor and report on whether this additional pot of public money is being used effectively.

We will continue to take an active interest in this issue in the coming months. Our section 5 inspection reports will focus much more sharply on how well schools are using their Pupil Premium money. Where we find funding isn't being spent effectively on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, we will be clear in our criticism.

It is vital that schools get this right. Every child who leaves school without the right qualifications faces a far more difficult path to fulfilling their potential and finding employment. We owe it to all our young people to ensure they are given every chance to succeed.

Introduction

The Pupil Premium was introduced in April 2011. It was allocated to children from low-income families who were known to be eligible for free school meals, and children who had been looked after continuously for more than six months.[1] Eligibility for the Pupil Premium for 2012–13 was extended to pupils who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years (known as the Ever6 Free School Meals measure). Schools also receive funding for children who have been looked after continuously for more than six months, and a smaller amount for the children of service personnel.[2]

Schools are free to spend the Pupil Premium as they see fit. However, they are accountable for how they use the additional funding to support pupils from low-income families and the other target groups. New measures have been included in the performance tables that show the achievement of pupils who attract the Pupil Premium.

In September 2012 Ofsted published a report based on the views of 262 school leaders gathered through inspections and telephone-interview questionnaires conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectors.[3] In the autumn term 2012, Ofsted followed up the findings of that survey by visiting a range of primary and secondary schools to see how effectively the schools were spending the funding to maximise achievement. This report draws together some of the effective practice that inspectors observed.

The schools that Ofsted visited for this survey had widely different allocations of Pupil Premium spending. For the primary schools visited, funding ranged from £2,400 to £83,896 in 2011/12 and from £4,200 to £134,323 in 2012/13 when the funding formula changed to include pupils who had been eligible for free school meals in the last six years (the 'Ever6' measure). Funding for the secondary schools visited ranged from £16,592 to £168,686 in 2011/12 and from £36,850 to £296,501 in 2012/13. But inspectors could see that however much funding the schools had, there were common characteristics to the most successful spending – spending that had led to standards rising and opportunities broadening for the most disadvantaged pupils. These characteristics are explained in this report, to help schools to consider how well they are spending their own allocation of the funding, and think about ways in which they could spend it even more effectively

Accompanying this report is a booklet that contains a series of tools to help schools 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.

[1] *Pupil Premium – what you need to know,* www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/premium/b0076063/pp. A premium has also been introduced for children whose parents are currently serving in the Armed Forces, designed to address the emotional and social well-being of these pupils. This issue is not a focus for this report.

[2] For pupils eligible for free school meals and those looked after the amount was £488 in 2011–12 and £600 in 2012–13. For service children in was £200 in 2011–12, rising to £250 in 2012–13.

[3] *The Pupil Premium*, Ofsted, September 2012, www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120197.

Spending the Pupil Premium successfully to maximise achievement – the overview

1 Where schools spent the Pupil Premium funding successfully to improve achievement, they shared many of the following characteristics. They:

- carefully ringfenced the funding so that they always spent it on the target group of pupils
- never confused eligibility for the Pupil Premium with low ability, and focused on supporting their disadvantaged pupils to achieve the highest levels
- thoroughly analysed which pupils were underachieving, particularly in English and mathematics, and why
- drew on research evidence (such as the Sutton Trust toolkit[4]) 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
- understood the importance of ensuring that all day-to-day teaching meets the needs of each learner, rather than relying on interventions to compensate for teaching that is less than good
- allocated their best teachers to teach intervention groups to improve mathematics and English, or employed new teachers who had a good track record in raising attainment in those subjects
- used achievement data frequently to check whether interventions or techniques were working and made adjustments accordingly, rather than just using the data retrospectively to see if something had worked
- made sure that support staff, particularly teaching assistants, were highly trained and understood their role in helping pupils to achieve
- systematically focused on giving pupils clear, useful feedback about their work, and ways that they could improve it
- ensured that a designated senior leader had a clear overview of how the funding was being allocated and the difference it was making to the outcomes for pupils
- ensured that class and subject teachers knew which pupils were eligible for the Pupil Premium so that they could take responsibility for accelerating their progress
- had a clear policy on spending the Pupil Premium, agreed by governors and publicised on the school website
- provided well-targeted support to improve attendance, behaviour or links with families where these were barriers to a pupil's learning
- had a clear and robust performance management system for all staff, and included discussions about pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium in performance management meetings
- thoroughly involved governors in the decision making and evaluation process
- were able, through careful monitoring and evaluation, to demonstrate the impact of each aspect of their spending on the outcomes for pupils.

2 Where schools were less successful in spending the funding, they tended to have at least some of the following characteristics. They:

- had a lack of clarity about the intended impact of the spending
- spent the funding indiscriminately on teaching assistants, with little impact
- did not monitor the quality and impact of interventions well enough, even where other monitoring was effective
- did not have a good performance management system for teaching assistants and other support staff
- did not have a clear audit trail for where the funding had been spent
- focused on pupils attaining the nationally expected level at the end of the key stage (Level 4, five A* to C grades at GCSE) but did not go beyond these expectations, so some more able eligible pupils underachieved
- planned their Pupil Premium spending in isolation to their other planning, for example, it was not part of the school development plan
- compared their performance to local rather than national data, which suppressed expectations if they were in a low-performing local authority

[4] Toolkit of Strategies to Improve Learning – Summary for Schools, Spending the Pupil Premium http://www.suttontrust.com/research/teaching-and-learning-toolkit-july-2012/

- compared the performance of their pupils who were eligible for free school meals with other eligible pupils nationally, rather than all pupils, again lowering expectations
- did not focus their pastoral work on the desired outcomes for pupils and did not have any evidence to show themselves whether the work had or had not been effective
- did not have governors involved in making decisions about the Pupil Premium, or challenging the way in which it was allocated.

3 Many schools visited were using the Pupil Premium well in some aspects of their work, and examples of those aspects form the second section of this report. A few, however, had thought through all aspects of their spending in great detail. In these schools, carefully targeted spending of the Pupil Premium funding, together with a generally effective approach to school improvement, were starting to lead to clear improvement in the outcomes for eligible pupils. The two case studies below explain the approaches that a primary and a secondary school took, and why these approaches were effective.

> ‘Very clear and challenging success criteria were set for each pupil.’

An analytical approach to improving achievement

The school’s context

This primary school is situated in one of the most deprived areas of the Midlands. Almost 80% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The vast majority of the pupils are White British. The school received £48,312 of funding from the Pupil Premium in 2011–12 and £74,400 in 2012–13.

How did the school spend the funding?

The largest allocations were to individual and small group tuition in English and mathematics for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6; an extended day for targeted pupils in the form of a breakfast and support session run by the learning mentor; and new laptop computers to support learning. Money was also spent on support for improving attendance and on music tuition.

The school was keenly aware that this was a significant amount of extra funding to receive and was determined from the outset to use it to good effect to continue to raise standards in the school. **A named governor** was nominated to have an oversight of the Pupil Premium and the full governing body was involved in making decisions about spending. Senior leaders and governors wrote **a policy** for spending the Pupil Premium, which laid out the principles and explained how the impact of the spending would be evaluated. **The finance manager was closely involved** in tracking the allocation and could, therefore, always account clearly for spending.

The senior leaders began by extending approaches that they already knew were working well, but that they had only been able to afford on a small scale. Small group **tuition for English and mathematics** aimed at pupils who were underachieving was working well, but the school believed that for some pupils more intensive **individual tuition** would work better. They employed, on a part-time basis, a very experienced qualified teacher who had a good track record of raising standards in challenging contexts. She worked with each selected pupil for one hour per week for 10 weeks. **Very clear and challenging success criteria** were set for each pupil and the

extent to which they used their new learning in the classroom was monitored throughout.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher also **studied the Sutton Trust's toolkit** and used this to inform their thinking. They were particularly struck by the report's findings on the potential impact of the careful use of feedback.[5] They **trained both teachers and teaching assistants** to improve the use of feedback in whole class, small group and individual lessons, and through marking.

Although attendance was above average in the school as a whole, it remained too low for some pupils who were eligible for the Pupil Premium. The school used some of the funding to **extend the school day** for these pupils, inviting and sometimes persuading their parents to bring them to a carefully planned breakfast and support session run by the learning mentor. This was coupled with **practical work with families** to help them to get their children to school every day on time, improved information about the importance of attendance and more motivating rewards.

The school was very aware that its pupils seldom had access to **good quality information communication technology** in their homes so could not practise the skills they learnt at school outside school hours or use computers for research. Equally, pupils often lacked the wider vocabulary and knowledge that they needed to reach the higher levels in their writing. The school used the laptops that they bought with some of the funding to **enhance pupils' research skills** in different subjects, to be able to conjure up instantly an image with which pupils may not be familiar, such a desert, a lion, or a snowy landscape, and to give them independent access outside of school hours to enhance their homework.

What was the impact of the school's work?

The school set very clear success criteria for each action they took. Where they employed staff they knew exactly what they aimed to achieve from this. The aims of specific interventions such as one-to-one tuition and small group work were clearly set, using data – the school defined how much the intervention course was expected to accelerate each pupil's progress, and how this progress should continue for the rest of the year.

This analytical approach and the resulting actions, including training for staff, is having a clear impact on improving teaching and the outcomes for pupils.

In lessons, verbal feedback to pupils was very skilful and really helped to move their learning on. Individual tuition was very well tailored to individual needs and the tutor and class teacher worked closely together. Pupils were able to explain what they had learnt in these sessions and how this had helped their skills and their confidence in class.

In 2012, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 or above, both in English and mathematics, rose overall. Mathematics came in line with the national average for the first time. In mathematics, pupils who were eligible for free school meals attained better than the same group nationally, and came much closer than before to the outcomes for all pupils nationally. In English, results also improved, and the attainment gap closed considerably. More pupils made expected progress in English and mathematics than in previous years. Attendance was high for all groups in comparison to national averages and persistent absence was almost non-existent.

'The introduction of the Pupil Premium funding gave the school a strong impetus to review the approaches that it was already using to improve achievement and to really define what was working best.'

[5] See footnote 3. The Sutton Trust toolkit notes that effective feedback has a 'very high impact for very low cost' (page 5).

'Gap busters' – identifying the levers for improvement

The school's context

This secondary school is situated on the outskirts of a major city. An average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. There are very high proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is an additional language. Attainment has been significantly above national average for three years but there has been a gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium and all pupils nationally. In 2011–12 the school received £55,000 of funding from the Pupil Premium and they received £75,000 in 2012–13.

How did the school spend the funding?

The introduction of the Pupil Premium funding gave the school a strong impetus to review the approaches that it was already using to improve achievement and to really define what was working best. The school set up its own 'Pupil Premium School Improvement Project' under **the leadership of an assistant headteacher appointed especially for this purpose.** The school closely **analysed both national research and local knowledge** about what makes a difference in narrowing the attainment gap between pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium and all pupils nationally. It then drew on all this information to focus its strategy on the ten activities that make the biggest difference in narrowing these gaps. Its own practice is now guided by these 'ten top gap busters', which are explained below.

The ten 'top gap busters'

1. **Data tracking that identifies the gaps** – data tracking is used rigorously across the whole school and identifies all underachieving pupils. A disproportionate number of these are disadvantaged pupils. The subsequent interventions are based on underperformance and other factors that contribute. These might be related, for example, to attendance, behaviour, or factors outside of school. The academic interventions draw on whole-school funding. Interventions to support the 'other factors' then draw on Pupil Premium funding.
2. **High profile of pupils eligible for free school meals** – the high profile of disadvantaged pupils among staff, pupils, and parents and carers ensures that all are aware of their needs and of the support that is available. Staff are made aware of the achievement data surrounding disadvantaged pupils and the research-driven responses that are possible. Because a strategic approach is taken, staff have professional respect for the school's Pupil Premium Project and its outcomes.
3. **Vertical tutoring** – vertical tutoring, where pupils from Years 7 to 11 are grouped together for pastoral times, allows a reduced form size of 21 pupils supported by one teacher, one teaching assistant and trained Year 11 mentors. This ensures that more individual attention can be given. As a result, the school knows its pupils very well and understands their needs. 'Learning conversations' take place regularly within the tutor group in the form of one-to-one mentoring, advice and personal support. Improved knowledge of the individual pupils and their needs leads staff to make insightful requests for specific funding from a 'pot' of Pupil Premium funding that the school has set aside especially to provide tailored additional support.
4. **Effective teaching and learning** – all staff recognise and accept that the vast majority of pupils' progress comes out of good teaching and learning on a day-to-day basis. There is, therefore, a major drive for independent learning, the development of thinking skills and clear assessments that support learning. Staff training has been focused accordingly.
5. **Strong careers information, advice and guidance** – careers education, information and advice is very strong. Careers advice and experiences are carefully mapped and recorded for all disadvantaged pupils. These pupils are provided with the best work experience placements. Pupils also receive a wide range of preparation activities for future life: work-related learning activities, access to vocational courses, one-to-one interviews, mock interviews, work experience fairs, careers fairs, post-16 information sessions

and outside career events. This ensures that disadvantaged pupils can make informed decisions about their courses and choices and be very well prepared for their future lives beyond 16.

6. **Literacy support** – the development of good literacy skills is a whole school focus. Standardised scores are collected for every pupil in every year for reading and spelling. These are carefully tracked and monitored across the school. Pupils with low literacy levels are provided with additional support so that basic skills can be developed properly. For disadvantaged pupils with literacy difficulties, the Pupil Premium funding is used to meet their individual needs in order to remove this barrier to learning.
7. **Targeted support** – tailored individual support is provided across the curriculum and arrangements are made for resources to be available for each pupil as needed. Staff take responsibility for determining the additional resources that pupils need in order to achieve well. Appropriate requests for resources are met quickly so that pupils can make the quickest possible progress.
8. **The full range of educational experiences** – support is given to ensure that all pupils have full access to broad educational experiences, such as residential courses, competing in sporting events and career-linked finance and banking events.
9. **Good attendance** – staff, teachers, parents, carers and pupils understand the causal link between attendance and achievement. Attendance levels for all disadvantaged pupils are checked and acted upon. Systems are in place to make early identification of issue and need.
10. **Good facilities for supported self-study** – the school considers this to be vital in order to even-out many of the disadvantages that pupils who are eligible for free school meals may face. They are provided with before and after school provision to enable supported self-study. Computer equipment, teaching support and meals are all on hand. This has proved to be one of the most effective mechanisms for helping these pupils to achieve more.

What was the impact of the school's work?

The impact of the Pupil Premium initiative was very evident. In 2012 every pupil entitled to Pupil Premium funding moved up by almost one grade or an average of five points per subject compared to the grade predicted for them.

The points scores and GCSE grades of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals increased considerably in 2012. For example, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE rose from 57% in 2011 to 80% in 2012. Gaps between the attainment of these pupils compared to all pupils nationally also narrowed greatly. In 2011 there was a 38 percentage point gap between the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals attaining five A*to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics and their peers nationally. This gap dropped to 18 percentage pointsin 2012. For the proportion attaining five A* to C grades at GCSE overall the gap narrowed from 27 percentage points to eight percentage points. Projections for 2013 indicate that gaps are expected to close even further.

Future practice is now guided by these top ten critical factors.

'In 2012 every pupil entitled to Pupil Premium funding moved up by almost one grade or an average of five points per subject compared to the grade predicted for them.'

'A strong focus on basic skills meant that pupils were able to gain the important mathematical skills and knowledge that they needed to reach higher levels.'

How schools maximised the impact of their spending

4 The case studies above exemplify how two schools spent their Pupil Premium funding well in all respects. The sections below explain in more detail some of the elements of successful planning and spending, and give some specific examples from other schools that Ofsted visited as part of the survey.

Targeting the funding well from the outset

5 The schools whose strategies had had the most impact on improving outcomes for pupils were those who had given careful thought to how they should spend the Pupil Premium funding. Where schools targeted the funding well, they:

- used their tracking data intelligently to analyse the underachievement of individual pupils but then went beyond this to analyse any patterns in underachievement in the school as a whole
- took a long term view and did not just concentrate on 'quick wins', trying to stop achievement gaps from widening long before the end of a key stage
- considered a range of barriers to pupils' learning, including attendance, behaviour, family circumstances and resources to support learning at home or at school
- knew exactly what the desired outcomes were for each aspect of work that they were planning to fund through the Pupil Premium
- used research evidence to inform their thinking.

Taking a long term view: getting it right in Year 2

The school's context

This is a larger than average-sized primary school in an area of high socio-economic deprivation. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the vast majority speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium funding is higher than the national average. When children start at the school, their skills are much less well developed than for most children of their age. Standards at the end of Year 6 are much lower than the national average but gaps are closing over time.

What did the school do?

The school's analysis showed that pupils who only gained a Level 2c in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 seldom reached Level 4 by the time they left the school at the end of Year 6. In order to raise attainment in mathematics, they decided to put additional resources into improving the number of pupils who leave Year 2 at age-related expectations, rather than relying on helping pupils to 'catch up' when they were older. The school used Pupil Premium funding to provide an intensive mathematics intervention for younger pupils. This programme was delivered daily to pupils on a one-to-one basis for as long as they required the support. A strong focus on basic skills meant that pupils were able to gain the important mathematical skills and knowledge that they needed to reach higher levels, even where they had found this difficult in their main lessons.

How well did it work and why?

Pupils who took part in this intervention made great gains in their learning. Almost all of them, by the end of the short programme, which lasted for several weeks according to need, had made the progress that would normally be expected in five terms. Although the number of pupils gaining Level 2b+ at the end of Year 2 remained lower than the national average overall, the achievement of pupils who attracted the Pupil Premium funding improved. In fact, this group attained better than their peers in the school in mathematics. This was because **the intervention strategy was tightly planned and well taught, so it enabled them to make rapid gains from their low starting points.** The school, therefore, decided to continue using this intervention strategy in the following academic year.

Targeting specific year groups in a primary school

The school's context

This is a large primary school, with a slightly higher than average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium funding, and many pupils from minority ethnic groups. Standards by the end of Year 6 are improving over time and coming close to the national average.

What did the school do?

The school used findings from their own self-evaluation to determine how to allocate the funding. They identified that some of the intervention strategies they were using were not having a good enough impact on raising standards because the work was not focused enough and they were not always being taught by suitable staff. They decided to use some of their funding to employ a good additional teacher for one term in Year 6. This meant that the class could be organised into smaller ability groups for English and mathematics to help underachievers to catch up with specific aspects of their learning while enabling more-able pupils to reach their potential.

How well did it work and why?

This strategy made a real difference to the achievement of pupils who attracted Pupil Premium funding. Previously this group were leaving the school four terms behind in their learning. In 2012, this gap narrowed considerably as pupils were less than one term behind other pupils nationally as they moved onto Year 7. **The success of this strategy was due to focused teaching groups, taught by a good, well-qualified teacher, which effectively met pupils' needs.** The school had decided to use the funding to appoint two teachers to lead intervention strategies across the school.

Involving staff in making decisions about pupils' needs

The school's context

This is a smaller than average secondary school with an average proportion of pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium. A high proportion of pupils are from ethnic minority groups and many of these speak English as an additional language. Attainment has been consistently above national figures for a number of years.

What did the school do?

The school used its Pupil Premium funding in a range of ways. One successful aspect they developed was to set aside a 'pot' of money from the Pupil Premium fund and involve staff closely in making decisions about what pupils need in order to improve their achievement. They had a system of bids for funding from subject leaders and tutors to support individual resource needs, such as text books that pupils could use at home, revision guides, revision materials, memory sticks, or the resources to run one-to-one tuition for a specific purpose. This system allowed those staff who knew the pupils best to take some responsibility for meeting the needs that they identified The school's clear and thorough assessment and tracking system helped staff to identify underachievement in particular subjects. In addition, newsletters home raised the profile of Pupil Premium and its possibilities with parents. The school encouraged parents and carers to put forward their suggestions about what their children might need to help them to achieve higher levels.

Each request, whether it be for a project or for individual support, was considered carefully by the Pupil Premium coordinator and discussed in detail with the person making the request. Funding was only allocated if a clear and justifiable aim was defined and the funding was likely to achieve this goal. For example funding for revision guides was considered carefully against the likely gains in attainment as well as to whether a revision guide was indeed the best strategy to achieve this overall aim.

How well did it work and why?

The impact of the Pupil Premium initiative was evident in the closing of gaps in attainment. In 2012 every Year 11 pupil who was eligible for the Pupil Premium exceeded their GCSE targets, which had been set using data on prior attainment. This success was due to the **highly individualised approach adopted by the school to support these pupils, based on rigorous use of data combined with a good knowledge of pupils as individuals.** The flexibility of the approach was also seen as a critical factor. The use of careful scrutinised bids for funding for specific purposes, as well as a wide range of other approaches, allowed the school to respond to needs as they arose. The school intended to continue to set aside a proportion of the Pupil Premium budget to be used in this way.

Effective intervention classes and individual tuition to improve achievement in English and mathematics

6 Many schools used intervention classes and individual tuition to help to improve pupils' skills and their rate of progress in English and mathematics. Where intervention classes or individual tuition were used successfully they:

- were carefully targeted to specific pupils to improve particular aspects of their skills or knowledge in reading, writing, communication or mathematics
- were taught by well-qualified specialist teachers, or well-trained and highly-competent teaching assistants, depending on the skills being taught
- were time limited, not a way of life
- were linked well to day-to-day teaching
- had clear success criteria
- did not have a negative impact on pupils' learning in any other area of the curriculum because the time when they took place was carefully planned
- were frequently evaluated and alterations were made quickly where strategies were not working.

Using specialist teachers to teach small groups who are underachieving in a specific aspect of English or mathematics

The school's context

This is an inner city secondary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium is above average. Pupils arrive at the school with very low levels of attainment. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has been historically low. It has been rising steadily over the past three years.

What did the school do?

When the school's effective tracking system identified pupils as underachieving, teachers highlighted the specific aspect with which the pupil needed help, such as spelling and punctuation. The pupil then attended regular intensive sessions over a short period of time with a specialist teacher. For example, an experienced English teacher worked effectively with a small group of Year 8 boys to improve their use of apostrophes for omission and possession. Once pupils grasped the concept or skill they returned to their normal lessons.

How well did it work and why?

This was a highly effective approach because teachers focused on a precise area of learning and knew exactly what they needed to achieve in the time available. Pupils enjoyed the sessions because of the rapid progress they made. They were engaged and focused on their learning during the sessions. **Regular and detailed monitoring following attendance at specialist sessions demonstrated that learning was usually consolidated**. The school had evaluated the programme well. Pupils had made accelerated progress during the sessions and this was beginning to have an impact on their progress in English and mathematics over time. The school was extending this approach to intervention beyond the core subjects.

Tailoring interventions to meet individual needs through systematic tracking of progress

The school's context

This is a larger than average-sized primary school in an area of high socio-economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for Pupil Premium funding is more than double the national average. Year 6 standards have recently improved from well below average to broadly in line.

What did the school do?

Funding was used to deliver a wide range of intervention strategies to raise attainment in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Intervention strategies were effective because they were driven by pupils' academic, emotional and social needs. Senior leaders held formal discussions with staff about pupils' progress every six weeks to identify pupils who needed additional support. This drove the deployment of teaching assistants and informed the most appropriate support strategy. This meant some classes had lots of support from additional adults, whereas others received less time. Each programme was designed to meet the needs of a group or an individual rather than an over-reliance on 'off the peg' strategies. Very clear success criteria meant that the staff who led the interventions, and the teaching assistants who supported pupils back in class, were in no doubt about what they needed to do to help pupils make up lost ground. Furthermore, senior leaders were able to measure the success of their actions and could quickly disregard intervention strategies which had little impact in closing achievement gaps.

How well did it work and why?

Achievement gaps between pupils who attracted Pupil Premium funding, other pupils in the school and all pupils nationally were narrowing convincingly in all year groups. This was because the school tracked the achievement of this group closely and was also fully alert to any emotional or social barriers that could have a negative impact on pupils' learning. **Intervention strategies were making a real difference to pupils' achievement, particularly in English. This was because they were tightly focused on gaps in pupils' learning and closely matched to pupils' needs.** The school was continuing to use the funding to support underachieving or vulnerable pupils.

Intervention targeted to overcome specific barriers to learning

The school's context

This is a larger-than-average secondary school in a socio-economically advantaged area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for Pupil Premium funding is lower than average. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, at grade C or higher, is above average.

What did the school do?

The school identified, through consultation with groups of pupils, different obstacles to success in different year groups for pupils who were eligible for the Pupil Premium. In response to this information and its own knowledge of the pupils, the school implemented a carefully planned programme of intervention which altered as pupils became older. This comprised intensive literacy tuition for Year 7 entrants with English scores that were at Level 3 and lower; one to one tuition for Year 8 and 9 students who were making less than expected progress in reading; and alternative curriculum choices (built around a GCSE English and mathematics core curriculum) for Year 10 and 11 students with low attendance. The intervention programme addressed the increasing risk of disaffection as students move through the school, caused by low literacy on entry and leading to low levels of attendance among a small minority by the time pupils reach Year 11. The school also personalised Pupil Premium spending further where appropriate, for example, using it to buy individual tuition or pay for specific enrichment.

How well did it work and why?

Achievement was improving for students eligible for the Pupil Premium and rates of progress were increasing for those attending the targeted provision. The students identified for individual support were thriving,

as indicated by their high attendance and strong predictions for final GCSE outcomes. **The strategy had worked well because the school started by finding out exactly why gaps in achievement were widening from Year 7 onwards, then devised a range of intervention tailored to stop this from happening.** Close tracking of achievement allowed the school to evaluate the success of the provision and to change the approach if necessary.

Looking beyond age-related expectations – helping more-able pupils to reach their potential

The school's context

This is a larger than average-sized primary school in an area of high socio-economic deprivation. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups and most speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for Pupil Premium funding is slightly higher the national average. Standards at the end of Year 6 are much lower than the national average but are improving over time.

What did the school do?

The school recognised that just aiming for pupils to reach 'age-related expectations' was not aspirational enough, particularly for some of the more-able pupils, so senior leaders began to take a wider perspective on pupils' achievement. They did not just consider whether pupils needed support to reach age-related expectations but took account of pupils' starting points and their potential to make even greater gains in their learning. This meant some pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, were expected to progress beyond the standards expected for their age by the time they left Year 6. The school carefully identified the factors that were preventing pupils from accelerated progress and used Pupil Premium funding to help to remove these barriers. For example, a programme of one-to-one support from a learning mentor was specifically focused on a small group of more-able pupils who lacked confidence or social skills to build their self-esteem. An additional teaching group was established to extend the science skills of more-able pupils. Speech and language programmes were targeted at pupils whose progress was being hampered by weak oracy skills, despite their obvious understanding of their learning.

How well did it work and why?

All of the targeted pupils made better than expected progress and were working above age-related expectations. One Year 6 pupil gained Level 5 in reading and writing and reached Level 6 in mathematics. **This strategy worked well because the school had a clear focus on raising aspirations. Leaders clearly identified barriers to pupils being able to reach the higher levels and were continually alert to the achievement of more-able pupils.** The school intended to continue to use this strategy to help more-able pupils reach their full potential.

'The school recognised that just aiming for pupils to reach 'age-related expectations' was not aspirational enough.'

Ensuring that teaching assistants help to raise standards

7 Employing new teaching assistants or extending the roles of those already in post were common ways for the schools visited, especially primary schools, to spend some of the funding. As previous Ofsted work has indicated, the indiscriminate use of teaching assistants can represent very poor value for money, with little or even negative impact on learning.[6] School leaders and governors need to be careful about spending their resources on teaching assistants and be clear about what they want to achieve. This section gives examples of where inspectors saw teaching assistants being used most effectively. Where the teaching assistants who were employed using Pupil Premium funding were most effective in helping to improve pupils' achievement, schools had:

- ensured that they thoroughly understood their role in helping to improve achievement
- trained their teaching assistants well to fulfil this role, and kept the training up to date
- extended or revised the teaching assistants' hours to enable them to work with teachers to plan and review pupils' learning
- placed the teaching assistants where data indicated that they were most needed to help pupils to catch up, rather than spreading them evenly among classes
- deployed the teaching assistants well to maximise their strengths with different subjects and age groups.

A well trained workforce

The school's context

This is an average-sized primary school in an area of high socio-economic deprivation. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is double the national average and a high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. More pupils than average are known to be eligible for the Pupil Premium funding. Standards at the end of Year 6 are lower than the national average but are improving over time.

What did the school do?

The school had directed most of its funding towards staffing costs for teaching assistants who were responsible for one-to-one and small group intervention across the school. The school was well aware that if they were not well trained and well deployed, teaching assistants can be ineffective in helping to raise standards. They had, therefore, trained all their teaching assistants very thoroughly and the assistants receive on-going training as needed. There was a clear target for each support strategy led by teaching assistants and they were fully aware of the difference they needed to make to pupil outcomes. Teaching assistants had a great deal of responsibility for planning how to reach these targets and were held to account for the impact of their work with pupils. The teaching assistants had risen to the challenge of this responsibility and as a result the strategies to support pupils were inventive, fluid and matched well to pupils' needs. For example, one teaching assistant led a small-group session on fine motor skills for Year 1 pupils. The sequence of lessons and the materials used were designed by the teaching assistant with the full support of senior leaders and class teachers. The impact of the work that the pupils were doing in this session was helping them considerably to improve their handwriting.

How well did it work and why?

Intervention strategies were having a positive impact on pupils who attracted Pupil Premium funding. Standards by the end of Year 6 rose in 2012 and the achievement gap between this group and their peers in school narrowed. Gaps were also closing in other year groups. The school's evidence indicated that **the carefully focused interventions led by the teaching assistants, combined with their highly focused work in class, have made a considerable contribution to these improvements.** The school had decided to build on this good practice and to extend it by focusing particularly on extending the achievement of more-able pupils who attract Pupil Premium funding.

[6] For example *The Special Educational Needs And Disability Review*, Ofsted 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/special-educational-needs-and-disability-review.

Making teaching assistants a full part of the team

The school's context

This primary school is set in an area of high economic deprivation. Around four fifths of the pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium. The vast majority of pupils are White British. Standards have been rising and are now close to the national average overall.

What did the school do?

The school had always employed a number of teaching assistants. On receiving the Pupil Premium funding, the headteacher read the Sutton Trust report, which caused him to reflect on the role of teaching assistants in the school. He concluded that the assistants were providing valuable emotional support to many pupils who badly needed this, and were good at keeping pupils on task. However, he realised that they were clearly not being maximised to support learning, and that this was a waste of a valuable resource. To help to put this right, the headteacher decided to extend the assistants' hours, using a small amount of Pupil Premium funding. This allowed them to review the day's learning with teachers, help to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and to be well informed about the learning planned for the next day. The headteacher also audited their skills and put in place a range of individualised training, according to need. He then instigated carefully targeted 'skills' lessons, where pupils worked closely with an adult in very small groups or one to one with teachers or teaching assistants for 20 minutes each day, focused on improving a very specific skill, for a short period of time.

How well did it work and why?

The school's evaluations showed that pupils made significant gains in a short period of time with the specific skills they were working on. They were transferring these well to lessons, helped by teaching assistants' good knowledge and understanding of what the pupils needed to do to improve their achievement. **The reason that the skills lessons were highly effective was because they started from a close analysis of pupils' needs and were taught by well-trained staff**. The school's results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 were the best they had been for many years, and gaps between eligible pupils and their peers had closed considerably.

Improving literacy, numeracy and social skills for the most vulnerable pupils in Year 7

The school's context

This is a very large mixed secondary school in which over a third of pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium. About a fifth of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Attainment is generally below average in English and mathematics and persistent absence from school has been high until recently.

What did the school do?

The school had been concerned about the progress being made by groups of low attaining pupils in Year 7, who often did not settle well into the secondary school environment. They decided to create two primary-style classes, where pupils spent more time with the same teachers, frequently practised their literacy and numeracy skills, and were able to establish more stable friendship groups, with the aim of making swifter and more secure progress and raising their levels of attainment. Many of these pupils were eligible for the Pupil Premium. Key to the strategy was well focused support from higher level teaching assistants, and it was this aspect on which the school chose to spend some of its Pupil Premium funding. These teaching assistants were very well trained. They had been systematically taught how best to support pupils with their learning. They knew how to develop literacy and numeracy skills, using well-established strategies, and fully understood the importance of continually giving positive, yet accurate, feedback to pupils. They read frequently with pupils, as well as supporting whole classes and leading small groups. They also supported pupils to develop their social skills and to improve their attendance where needed.

How well did it work and why?

The vast majority of pupils in these groups were making at least expected progress, and an increasing number were making more than expected progress. Gaps between these pupils and their peers were therefore closing. The reading programme was particularly successful – pupils' reading ages had increased at a greater rate than their chronological age and continued to do so. This success was because all staff were continually focused on improving achievement and knew how to do so. The pupils' progress was tracked in detail, not only by the whole school tracking and assessment systems, but also by a focus group that met weekly to monitor progress closely. The teaching assistants' knowledge of the pupils' learning and achievements played a key part in these meetings, and helped to ensure that teaching was continually fine-tuned to meet the pupils' needs. Senior leaders specifically monitored the quality of lessons and the pupils' work. Success was evaluated formally every term, and the group's progress reported specifically to the governing body.

'The reason that the skills lessons were highly effective was because they started from a close analysis of pupils' needs and were taught by well-trained staff.'

Removing barriers to learning by developing subject-specific vocabulary

The school's context

Just fewer than half the pupils at this secondary school are supported through Pupil Premium funding, which is much higher than the national average. Around half of the pupils at the school are from minority ethnic heritages and most of these speak English as an additional language. A large minority of pupils enrol at the school other than at the usual times after Year 7 and many of these pupils speak no English when they arrive.

What did the school do?

The school identified that one of the barriers to learning for a group of Year 9 pupils who speak English as an additional language was that they were often making errors with subject specific vocabulary. This was sometimes holding them back from gaining the higher levels, even though they were able pupils. A number of these pupils were eligible for the Pupil Premium, so the school decided to employ a teaching assistant – a specialist in supporting pupils who speak English as an additional language – to work specifically with selected pupils on this aspect of their learning. The assistant worked with pupils in targeted lessons, but also liaised with teachers about the vocabulary that pupils would need for forthcoming pieces of work, and specific sentence constructions with which they struggled. As a result, pupils were soon able to use and understand academic language and access most aspects of the curriculum at an appropriate level.

How well did it work and why?

This approach was very successful because **the teaching assistant's specialist skills were put to good use** to help pupils to improve their achievement and to remove specific barriers to their learning in different subjects. The impact of the work she did with pupils was evident in the quality of their work, their far more accurate use of appropriate technical and subject-specific vocabulary, and their resulting confidence. The school was aiming to extend this strategy further to improve the achievement of other pupils.

'As a result of these well-focused initiatives, led by experienced and well-trained staff, attendance in the school had risen overall, and persistent absence fallen.'

Minimising barriers to learning and achievement

8 Where schools had successfully begun to narrow the gaps in achievement between pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium and their peers they had often thought carefully about what barriers to learning pupils were experiencing, and how to remove or at least minimise them. Schools that had done this well had:

- thought about each pupil in the context of their home circumstances, asking themselves, for example, whether they needed to work closely with parents or support parents in some way in order to ensure that the pupil could succeed in school
- considered whether poor behaviour, high exclusions or low attendance were stopping individual pupils from achieving as much as they could
- reflected on ways in which they could better support older pupils to study independently outside of the school day
- worked to improve pupils' social and emotional skills where these were barriers to learning
- ensured that low expectations were not a barrier to achievement by considering the potential of individuals and not settling for more-able pupils only reaching expected levels for their age just because they were eligible for the Pupil Premium.

Focusing on attendance

The school's context

This is a large secondary school in which a smaller than average proportion of pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium. The majority of pupils are White British.

What did the school do?

The school identified that for a small number of pupils poor attendance was contributing significantly to their underachievement. They had taken a number of actions previously but these had not had the desired impact for this small group. The school decided to appoint a parent support adviser and to ensure that this person was well qualified and experienced. Using Pupil Premium funding, they managed to appoint a former education welfare officer, which they viewed as 'a huge bonus'. This member of staff had a caseload of about 20 pupils at any one time, and worked with pupils and their parents to solve various issues that were preventing the pupils from attending school. In addition, the school used the funding to set up a 'welcome to school' room, staffed by two teaching assistants, as a halfway house for pupils who were finding it difficult to return to school full time after long-term or sporadic absence.

How well did it work and why?

As a result of these well-focused initiatives, led by experienced and well-trained staff, attendance in the school had risen overall, and persistent absence fallen. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals was 99% in 2012. The parent support adviser's work was very successful. The parents with whom the adviser had worked had a more positive relationship with the school and their children's attendance was better. By also working with feeder primary schools, **whole families became engaged and this prevented some attendance difficulties from becoming ingrained for the younger children who join the secondary school with better attendance**. Some of the more vulnerable pupils had a smoother transition from primary to secondary school than in previous years. The 'welcome to school' room helped to get some pupils who were previously attending little or not at all back into school. Case studies show a number of success stories. A boy whose poor attendance and behaviour in Year 8 meant that he was severely underachieving settled well into Year 9, he attended well and was exceeding his targets in English and mathematics. A Year 11 boy who was at risk of exclusion now successfully attended a college course, which may lead to an apprenticeship when he leaves.

Providing after-school study facilities

The school's context

This secondary school has an average number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. There are very high proportions of pupils from ethnic minority groups and for whom English is an additional language.

What did the school do?

The school was aware that some pupils, particularly some who were eligible for the Pupil Premium, did not have any quiet places to study in their homes and that this became a particular issue for Year 11 pupils. Leaders decided to create an after-school study area for Year 11 to use between the end of school and 5.30pm. The atmosphere was reasonably informal but structured, with different subject staff present to support and coach, and tea and toast was available. The sessions were available to all pupils, but those eligible for the Pupil Premium were particularly encouraged to attend, especially if staff thought they needed to.

How well did it work and why?

So far, the initiative was working well. The pupils were finding the quiet, supportive atmosphere very helpful and the sessions were well attended by those pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium. **More pupils were completing their work on time and to a better standard, which was beginning to have a positive impact on their achievement in lessons and their performance in examinations.**

Creating a nurture group to improve achievement

The school's context

This is a large primary school with a low proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium. The majority of pupils are White British.

What did the school do?

The school used some Pupil Premium funding to part-fund a nurture group for a small number of pupils, including those eligible for the Pupil Premium.[7] All the selected pupils had been identified as underachieving because of social, emotional or behavioural reasons. For several pupils, their introverted behaviour and lack of confidence were holding them back in whole-class lessons. The group was led by an 'Inclusion Manager' who was a qualified teacher, assisted by two teaching assistants. The aim of the group was to improve pupils' behaviour and their social and learning skills and to give them the confidence to participate more fully in whole-class work. There was also a clear plan to improve pupils' achievement in reading and writing. Baseline assessments in social and emotional skills, as well as academic skills, helped to give leaders a clear starting point from which to measure improvement. The group leader worked closely with parents, giving them good strategies to support their children at home and to manage their own anxieties about their children's development.

How well did it work and why?

The group continued for the whole of the academic year, with pupils attending the group for some of each week and their main class for the rest. **Pupils made considerable progress from their starting points, both in the social, emotional and behavioural aspects and with their reading and writing skills.** Pupils became more confident in their main classes and this increased their participation. Parents reported that the children were happier and their behaviour was more settled at home. Attendance also improved for those for whom it was an issue.

[7] See further information section for Ofsted's report on nurture groups.

Meeting individuals' particular needs

9 In addition to their broader strategies to improve academic achievement, schools often spent smaller amounts of the funding on meeting the specific needs of individuals, to keep them on track, prevent them from underachieving or broaden their horizons. Other schools considered how they could support the development of individuals' particular talents and skills. When they did this well they did one or more of the following and then took carefully targeted action. They:

- used their broad knowledge of pupils and their families to identify potential barriers to individual pupils attaining their goals
- realised when talented pupils might not fulfil their potential in a particular subject or skill because of a lack of opportunities outside of school, or a lack of family finances
- recognised when pupils were at risk of underachieving because of particular circumstances
- carefully identified the gaps in the experiences that poorer pupils had compared to their more affluent peers, and the impact that this might have on their future
- considered how funding could be used to extend pupils' experiences and skills beyond their academic gains.

> Pupils became more confident in their main classes and this increased their participation. Parents reported that the children were happier and their behaviour was more settled at home. Attendance also improved for those for whom it was an issue.

Supporting a new arrival with very little English to achieve well and quickly

The school's context

This primary school serves an area of high social deprivation. Around half the pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium. Attainment is below average but not low. Eligible pupils now attain and achieve as well as other pupils.

What did the school do?

A boy from Romania joined the school in 2010. He was a Year 4 pupil and spoke no English. The school recruited a multilingual assistant for two hours each week, using funding from the Pupil Premium. In addition, the boy was given targeted support by the school's specialist 'English as an additional language' teaching assistant. This allowed the pupil to receive one-to-one English and reading tuition five times per week, and he made good progress. When he joined Year 5 the pupil received four phonics sessions a week, four one-to-one reading sessions and 90 minutes of additional English support. The school recognised the boy's good potential and set challenging targets. Termly targets were shared with the pupil and also his parents, using a translator.

How well did it work and why?

These carefully targeted individualised interventions led to accelerated progress. From being unable to access much of the curriculum in Year 4, the boy was working at Level 4b in reading, 4c in mathematics and 3b in writing by the end of Year 5. His attendance, which had initially been low, also improved. In Year 4 it was 86% and in Year 5 it was 96%. He was now well placed to move on to further success in secondary school.

Raising aspirations and broadening experiences for a high attaining pupil

The school's context

This is a faith secondary school, in an ethnically very diverse London location. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium.

What did the school do?

This pupil had arrived in England when she was seven years old, speaking virtually no English. Her family was very impoverished financially and she had lived in many different places during her time at the school. Despite these disadvantages she made exceptional progress in secondary school. She learned English quickly and achieved Level 5 in English, science and mathematics by the end of Year 6, and also worked at this level in other subjects. The pupil gained six GCSEs at A* when she was only in Year 9. Now in Year 11, she was taking AS Level courses in English language and literature alongside sixth form students, as well as a range of other GCSE courses. The school had provided well for her exceptional academic ability through their usual work but also used the Pupil Premium funding to help her to raise her aspirations, know what might be possible and challenge her further. She had visited universities and attended courses, plays and concerts. The school was supporting her to try to gain a boarding scholarship to the sixth form of a major public school

How well did it work and why?

This student had easily reached the key academic thresholds by the end of Year 9 and has remained well ahead of her peers. Her attendance was excellent and she loved school. She may have been successful academically without any additional input. However **the school had successfully shown her what her academic excellence could lead her to. The Pupil Premium had provided for her some of what a more advantaged background might have. Her aspirations for the future were very high.**

Maintaining high aspirations at a time of personal crisis

The school's context

This secondary school has a high proportion of pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium. The proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language and the proportion identified as having special educational needs are both high.

What did the school do?

A pupil who was eligible for free school meals became temporarily looked after in Year 11 following a family trauma. This unsettled her enormously and her work began to suffer. She had been predicted to gain five or more GCSEs at grades C or above and had plans to go to college, but these were now at risk given her family circumstances. The school first provided her with social and emotional support, and ongoing counselling so that she was coping enough emotionally to receive academic support in order to catch up lost ground.

During the time that she was looked after, this pupil received a highly individualised programme of additional teaching, funded by the Pupil Premium. She received daily mathematics tuition for an hour before school for two months in the run up to GCSE. She attended homework club after school in the science department every Wednesday. She attended extra English lessons by dropping one of her option subjects, thereby receiving two hours of extra English tuition a week. She was predicted a grade A in physical education, but had fallen behind, so the final part of the weekly support was lunchtime tuition for this subject. The pupil also attended Easter revision classes for mathematics, English, and history and was given materials and equipment and revision guides for every subject.

How well did it work and why?

This intensive, individualised programme of support worked very well and succeeded in **putting this pupil back on track academically** despite some traumatic family circumstances and time missed from school as a result. She gained eight GCSEs at grade C or above, including four at grade B and one grade A, exceeding the school's predictions. She succeeded in all the subjects for which she had been given additional tuition. The pupil was now in the sixth form studying for A levels.

The active involvement of governors

10 While governors had generally been informed about the Pupil Premium funding and what it had been spent on, they did not always play a full part in making decisions about its allocation, or discussing the impact of the actions taken. Where governors took an effective role in ensuring that the Pupil Premium was used well they:

- were fully involved from the outset in deciding on the way in which the funding would be allocated
- required a clear policy to be written about the Pupil Premium, and contributed to its content
- were committed to ensuring that every pupil, irrespective of starting point or background, achieved their potential, and used this principle to drive every discussion about the Pupil Premium
- asked challenging questions about how effective each action funded by the Pupil Premium was being in improving achievement
- told parents what the Pupil Premium was being spent on, and in the best examples, how well this was working.

> 'Governors influenced the school's strategic thinking about the Pupil Premium. They were fully involved in monitoring and evaluating its impact.'

A fully involved governing body

The school's context

This inner-city primary school has a high proportion of pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium. Attainment has been very low and is now rising.

What did the school do?

The Chair of Governing Body worked in education and was very knowledgeable about the Pupil Premium and best practice generally. He knew the importance of getting it right in the classroom on a day-to-day basis and not relying on interventions to make up for weak teaching. When the Pupil Premium was first introduced, the Chair read the Sutton Trust report thoroughly and noted the key aspects, particularly the importance of training and deploying teaching assistants effectively.[8] He summarised these findings for the headteacher and the rest of the governors. The governing body then visited another local school to look at its practice in raising attainment, and formed a working party to consider how its Pupil Premium funding could be spent.

A specific committee took on the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the funding. They knew how much of the money had been spent, and on what. Governors from this committee took part in learning walks to see the impact of specific aspects of spending, as well as scrutinising data on the attainment of eligible pupils. Pupil Premium funding was also a regular standing item at the finance committee's meetings. Information about the school's spending was published on the school's website, and governors checked that this was complete and accurate.

How well did it work and why?

Governors influenced the school's strategic thinking about the Pupil Premium. They were fully involved in monitoring and evaluating its impact. Through this process, they became more knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the achievement of different groups within the school.

[8] See footnote 3 and further information section.

Effective monitoring and evaluation of the impact of spending

11 When schools effectively monitored and evaluated the impact of their Pupil Premium spending this made a considerable difference to the effectiveness of the actions they were taking. Where schools monitored the impact of their spending effectively and efficiently they:

- brought together all the evidence available to them to make judgements about what was going well and what needed to change, including data, pupils' work, observations, case studies, and pupils' and staff's views
- did not wait until the end of an initiative or intervention to see if it was working
- made changes to their planned strategies according to what they learned from their monitoring and evaluation information
- took as rigorous an approach to evaluating the impact of pastoral interventions – those related to attendance, building confidence, improving behaviour, working with parents – as they did to academic ones.

A change in strategy arising from good quality evaluation

The school's context

The school serves an area of very high social deprivation. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for the Pupil Premium is very high, as is the percentage of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. The school has a history of low attainment and attainment is currently significantly below the national averages at Key Stage 1 and 2.

What did the school do?

The school used Pupil Premium funding at the start of 2011/12 to support a drive to improve the reading skills of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils who were underachieving. The programme was led by supply teachers and teaching assistants. The input was monitored and evaluated by the senior management team over the course of the initiative. This included the observation of teaching and learning, a scrutiny of pupils' work and the analysis of school-held data.

How well did it work and why?

Senior leaders came to the conclusion that the pupils who were taking part in the programme were not making sufficient progress with their reading skills in order to narrow the gaps that existed. They concluded that the reason for this was the poor quality of supply staff used to deliver the programme. They lacked the skills and subject knowledge required to accelerate progress. The headteacher also felt that supply staff did not establish positive relationships with pupils in the same way as permanent staff. The teaching assistants did not have sufficiently high expectations.

As a result, the school decided to use Pupil Premium funding to employ sports coaches to provide physical education lessons and specialist coaching to all pupils in Years 5 and 6. Physical education was timetabled for three hours a week for these year groups. This meant that class teachers were free from their usual class teaching. **While their class took part on physical education, the class teachers took responsibility for providing focused support to individual pupils and small groups. In this way pupils benefitted from good subject knowledge and high expectations**. Planning was tailored to the needs of individuals and progress carefully monitored. Well-trained higher level teaching assistants also withdrew small groups of pupils but under the direction of the class teacher to whom they were accountable. Pupils were taken out during the sports sessions to receive support in either mathematics or reading. A feature of the support, particularly in relation to mathematics, was that staff were not only responding to pupils' misconceptions noticed during classroom activities but also preparing pupils for the forthcoming series of lessons.

As a result of this initiative pupils made better progress in reading and mathematics in 2012 than in the previous year. Pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium were performing significantly better in English and mathematics since the introduction of this new strategy. There was evidence to suggest that the gap was closing in comparison to national figures.

Monitoring and evaluation – everyone's responsibility

The school's context

This is an average-sized primary school in an area of high socio-economic deprivation. Many more pupils speak English as an additional language than found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for Pupil Premium funding is broadly average.

What did the school do?

The Pupil Premium had a high priority across the school. The school's rationale for using the funding was effectively shared through an agreed policy. The achievement of pupils who attracted Pupil Premium funding was carefully tracked so senior leaders knew where there were gaps in achievement in each year group and class across the school. Teachers checked and reported on the progress of this group of pupils through regular discussions in teams and with senior leaders about pupils' achievement. The way in which eligible pupils were achieving was a part of performance management discussions for all staff. Members of the governing body were involved in making decisions on how to use the funding. Clear reports to governors from the headteacher meant governors had an accurate understanding of the difference that the school's actions were making to pupils who attracted Pupil Premium funding. Governors asked well-focused questions about what the evaluation was showing and what needed to be done differently.

How well did it work and why?

Achievement gaps between pupils who attracted Pupil Premium funding, other pupils in the school and all pupils nationally were narrowing convincingly in all year groups. **This was because the school tracked the achievement of this group closely and intervened quickly to tackle underperformance.** The governing body challenged senior leaders on the achievement of this group because they received timely reports. Consequently they were able to hold senior leaders to account for their use of the funding to narrow achievement gaps.

The effective use of tracking to monitor improvement and identify need

The school's context

This is a larger than average-sized primary school in an area of high socio-economic deprivation. Nearly half the pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium funding. From lower than average starting points pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 6.

What did the school do?

The school's focus for its various intervention strategies fell into three distinct strands: attainment and progress; attendance; and care guidance and support. Thorough analysis of RAISEonline data combined with information from the school's internal tracking system was used to identify the pupils who were underachieving, plan which interventions would suit them best and monitor pupils' subsequent achievement. For the latter two, clear and personal knowledge of pupils' individual circumstances and needs as well as attendance data were used to select and target support appropriately.

How well did it work and why?

Leaders never waited until the end of an intervention to analyse its effectiveness so were able to make alterations as the intervention progressed if it was not working as well as it should. Data about the 'attainment and progress' strand of the intervention programme led the school to move away from using teaching assistants as the main leaders of small group intervention. These groups were now led by selected teaching staff, including members of the senior leadership team.

Carefully planned summer schools with a clear purpose

12 Secondary schools can bid for additional funding from the Pupil Premium fund to run a summer school, as well as receiving their usual Pupil Premium allocation. Generally, summer schools appeared to be at an early stage of development and overall were not seen to be making a meaningful impact for disadvantaged pupils. Schools were not always clear about the intended outcomes of the summer school or which specific pupils the activities were intended to benefit. The best aspects of the summer schools identified from the visits were that secondary schools had sometimes:

- ensured that the aims of the summer school were clear from the outset and used these aims to guide the formulation of a relevant programme
- worked closely with their feeder primary schools to ensure that the 'target audience' of pupils was correctly identified and contacted
- included opportunities for the development of basic skills as well as for social skills in the summer school programme
- carried out a full evaluation of the summer school which measured the short and medium term impact on its stated aims, and had plans to measure the longer term impact during the course of the year
- involved primary schools in the planning and delivery of the programme and shared with them an evaluation of the project subsequently.

A well planned summer school programme

The school's context

This is a below average sized secondary school, where around half the pupils are in receipt of free school meals. A very high proportion of pupils are from ethnic minority groups and many of these pupils speak English as an additional language. Attainment on entry is consistently well below the national average, as is attainment by the end of Key Stage 4, although pupils make broadly average progress during their time at the school. The gap between the attainment of pupils in receipt of the Pupil Premium and all pupils nationally is closing rapidly and strongly over time.

What did the school do?

The school decided to target pupils in Year 6 who were about to join their school, and who were in receipt of free school meals, and also to include their younger siblings. Qualifying children were targeted through their feeder primary schools by the Head of Year 7 who promoted the summer school to the children during school visits. An ambitious sports camp was delivered over two weeks using the services of a commercial company. Each day the pupils participated in a variety of activities including football, dance, basketball, cheerleading, cricket and other sporting activities. Seventy-seven children attended the summer school over the two weeks, from 21 different feeder primary schools.

How well did it work and why?

The summer school worked well because the **secondary school closely involved its feeder primary schools** in order to recruit a large number of qualifying pupils and to ensure that they attended. The themed approach to the summer school, majoring on sport, was popular and the range of sports chosen appealed to girls and boys in equal measure.

As a result of the summer school, both **children and their parents and carers became more familiar with the secondary school**. Evaluation showed that pupils felt confident when they joined the school. The vast majority settled quickly and attributed this at least in part to the confidence that they had gained during the

summer school. Parents and carers also got to know the school and **many barriers were broken down** – attendance at school events and for individual reasons was good for parents and carers of the summer school pupils. Many **pupils also joined local sports clubs or wished to continue with the sports** they tried during the summer now that they had joined the secondary school.

In the school as a whole, gaps in attainment between pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium and their peers had closed in some aspects and were closing in others. The impact of the Pupil Premium initiatives were very evident on GCSE results gained in 2012 and on those predicted for 2013. The school felt that its summer school acted as a useful pre-cursor to further work to be carried out later in Year 7 aimed at accelerating attainment and progress in school and was a valuable aid to transition.

After the success of this year's summer school, the school planned to use Pupil Premium funding to continue some of the work that they began this summer, using the services of the same sports company to develop sustainable out of hours sporting opportunities for all disadvantaged children at the school. Evening and weekend multi-sports clubs and Easter schools were proposed. The school was already planning its summer school for 2013 and intended to enrol an even larger number of targeted pupils, enlisting further help from its feeder primary schools. They planned to broaden the activities beyond sport.

'The summer school worked well because the secondary school closely involved its feeder primary schools in order to recruit a large number of qualifying pupils.'

Notes

Between September and December 2012, Her Majesty's Inspectors visited 43 primary schools and 25 secondary schools. The proportion of pupils in each school who were eligible for the Pupil Premium varied from lower than average to very high across the sample. The schools were located in both urban and rural areas and varied in size and composition. At their previous Ofsted inspection none had been judged to be inadequate.

Inspectors asked headteachers for a full breakdown of how they had spent their past allocations of the Pupil Premium funding, and how they were spending it currently. Inspectors then evaluated how effectively the school had planned to spend the funding and how well this was actually working to improve achievement for eligible pupils. They did this by looking at achievement data and a range of other documentation, including monitoring and evaluation documents; talking with senior staff, other staff, pupils and governors; and observing different activities on which the school had spent the funding.

Further information

The Pupil Premium, Ofsted, September 2012, www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120197.

Supporting children with challenging behaviour through a nurture group approach, Ofsted, July 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100230.

The special educational needs and disability review, Ofsted 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090221.

Pupil Premium – what you need to know, Department for Education, 2012; www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/premium/b0076063/pp.

Toolkit of Strategies to Improve Learning – Summary for Schools, Spending the Pupil Premium, The Sutton Trust; http://www.suttontrust.com/research/teaching-and-learning-toolkit-july-2012/

Annex A: Providers visited

Primary schools visited

Primary school	Local authority
Berwick Hills Primary School	Middlesbrough
Birkby Junior School	Kirklees
Blakenall Heath Junior School	Walsall
Burnley Road Junior Infant and Nursery School	Calderdale
Capenhurst CofE Primary School	Cheshire West and Chester
Castle Bromwich Junior School	Solihull
Cheetwood Primary School	Manchester
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School	Leeds
Devonshire Junior School	Sandwell
Edleston Primary School	Cheshire East
Fleetwood Flakefleet Primary School	Lancashire
Godwin Primary School	Barking and Dagenham
Gorton Mount Academy	Manchester
Greenhill Primary School	Leeds
Hazelwood Junior School	Enfield
Holbrook Primary School	Coventry
Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School	St. Helens
Holywell Green Primary School	Calderdale
Joseph Cash Primary School	Coventry
Leftwich Community Primary School	Cheshire West and Chester
Lethbridge Primary School	Swindon
Liskeard Hillfort Primary School	Cornwall
Longford Park Primary School	Coventry
Marsden Community Primary School	Lancashire
Norfolk Community Primary School	Sheffield
Northfield Manor Primary School	Birmingham
Park Way Primary School	Kent
Roche Community Primary School	Cornwall
St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School, Wootton Bassett	Wiltshire
St George's Church of England Primary School	Birmingham
St George's, Bickley, Church of England Primary School	Bromley
St John Southworth Roman Catholic Primary School, Nelson	Lancashire
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Preston	Lancashire
St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Sabden	Lancashire
St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Alkrington	Rochdale
St Nicholas' CofE Middle School	Worcestershire
St Peter's CofE Primary School	Wigan
St Thomas More RC Primary School	Kingston upon Hull
Wakefield Lawefield Primary School	Wakefield
Wendover Church of England Junior School	Buckinghamshire
Weobley Primary School	Herefordshire

Providers visited

Secondary schools visited

Secondary school	Local authority
Biddenham Upper School and Sports College	Bedford
Campion School	Northamptonshire
Carr Manor Community School, Specialist Sports College	Leeds
Church Hill Middle School	Worcestershire
Clevedon School	North Somerset
Danum Academy	Doncaster
De La Salle School and Language College	Essex
Gosforth Central Middle School	Newcastle upon Tyne
Hall Green School	Birmingham
Hind Leys Community College	Leicestershire
John Mason School	Oxfordshire
John Port School	Derbyshire
Kingsbury School, A Specialist Science College with Mathematics	Warwickshire
Lea Manor High School Performing Arts College	Luton
Maria Fidelis Roman Catholic Convent School FCJ	Camden
Newman Catholic College	Brent
Pittville School	Gloucestershire
Rush Croft Sports College	Waltham Forest
St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic Centre for Learning (VA)	Knowsley
St Matthew Academy	Lewisham
Swanmore College of Technology	Hampshire
Swinton Community School	Rotherham
The Cavendish School	East Sussex
The City of Leicester College	Leicester
The International School	Birmingham
The Kimberley School	Nottinghamshire
The Mandeville School Specialist Sports College	Buckinghamshire

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