

**TO: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
10 SEPTEMBER 2014**

**LOCAL CASE STUDIES ON THE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE PUPIL PREMIUM GRANT
FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

Director of Children, Young People and Learning

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Panel on the support provided to schools from the Virtual School in enhancing the impact of the Pupil Premium Grant for Looked After Children to secure successful outcomes for young people.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the work of the Virtual School in supporting schools to enhance the positive impact of the use of the Pupil Premium Grant.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To update the Panel on the effective use of the Pupil Premium grant for Looked After Children.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 For children in care schools can be very challenging places. Gaps in learning due to various reasons and their complex needs are often not always fully understood. This can lead to a lack of sufficient challenge from lessons, and unplanned school moves and other transitions can also cause problems. The Pupil Premium is therefore a valuable tool in ensuring that children in care are well supported and that some of the known issues, such as low levels of educational attainment and progress and low attendance levels are mitigated. The Bracknell Forest Virtual School uses the Pupil Premium to help build children's confidence and provide opportunities for tailored support.
- 5.2 Unlike in previous years, there is no requirement for the authority to pass on a set amount of funding to the school. Instead the money must be managed by the Virtual School to be used to improve outcomes as identified in the Personal Education Plan (PEP) in consultation with the designated teacher. This puts the child's needs at the centre, managed through high quality PEPs. Although £121,600 has been provisionally allocated for 2014/15, any further allocation is made in view of the individual needs of the child.

- 5.3 The Bracknell Forest Virtual School aims to use the Pupil Premium Plus to improve outcomes for children in the following areas:

- Academic achievement and progress
- Wider achievement e.g. in an area in which the child is gifted and talented
- Attendance
- Inclusion (by reducing internal and external exclusion)
- Transition (e.g. between key stages or between schools)
- Mental health (overcoming the effects of attachment and developmental trauma) where this affects learning

This is done through support for learning and providing personalised learning resources. Identifying the needs of pupils is the key to making the most effective use of the Pupil Premium. With this level of knowledge the school is able to tailor the use of the Pupil Premium to the exact needs of its recipients.

6 CASE STUDIES

- 6.1 The following case studies summarise some of the opportunities for the creative use of the Pupil Premium Grant. However, it is worth noting this is still at an early stage and more time is needed to have a clear view of the impact the grant is having on outcomes for young people.
- 6.2 **Child A** was experiencing severe challenges outside school which had an emotional impact on his health and well-being towards the end of December 2013. His foster carer was finding it increasingly difficult to encourage him to maintain a healthy diet, and school teachers had noted a worrying trend of unhealthy eating habits, and a lack of focus in school. This carried over into the start of January 2014 and as a result at a planning meeting held in school further actions were agreed. In partnership with the Headteacher, it was decided that he will arrive at school earlier to have breakfast at school, and will stay in school for lunch as well. In addition to this, 1 to 1 sessions were set up for 2 afternoons a week lasting an hour each time to support him in English and maths. These were to help him prepare for his forthcoming exams and the plan was funded by the pupil premium. By attending each breakfast and lunch session between January and May 2014, he developed healthier eating habits, became visibly happier, was more engaged with adults for a professional purpose and also attempted all of his summer exams.
- 6.3 **Child B** had experienced severe relationship trauma from an early age. This resurfaced when suitable adopters were identified which also tied in with a change in school (not in Bracknell Forest). The need for a key adult in his new school was identified who would spend dedicated time each day with him. The Headteacher subsequently advertised for a relevant professional and made an appointment during the initial days of Child B joining their school. This arrangement was for the 2013 - 14 academic year. The school's commitment in meeting the needs of the young person were further reflected in the fact that despite limited funding being available through the Pupil Premium Grant, they met the difference through their own budget and found further areas of engagement for the Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA). Child B was supported in class by the HLTA (under teacher direction) for the morning and final hour in the afternoon for the autumn term and for the morning during the spring term. He was also able to see her at any point during the school day if he was concerned or anxious about anything. The summer term focused on this latter ad hoc opportunity for Child B. The emotional confidence he has developed during this period has enabled him to develop independence skills and take responsibility for his

own learning. He is now a keen learner who looks forward to school. He has also been recorded as making 3 sub levels of progress across Reading, Writing and Maths which is in line with the expected levels of progress and the targets that were set for him at the start of the year.

- 6.4 **Child C** is a keen drama student and has aspirations of pursuing her acting interests in the future. She is progressing in line with her targets and is a "bright student" according to her form tutor. The foster carers were struggling to meet the costs of Theatre Train (a drama school) but were equally keen for her to attend. Following discussions with the Headteacher, the school matched the pupil premium allocation to ensure that financial arrangements were in place for future years as well provided that the foster carers made relevant transport arrangements and that Child C continued her positive contribution at school. These positive outcomes showed Child C how professionals around her wanted her to be successful and support her ambitions. She now benefits from a more positive relationship with her foster carers, has met her end of year targets for all of her subjects and continues to develop her acting and drama skills through the professional support she receives. An attendance figure of 98.3% (for 2013/14) further represents a positive change in attitude (up from 91% for 2012/13 which was mainly due to a lack of engagement with foster carers and school in general).

- 6.5 Attached at appendix 1 is an LGiU briefing on Pupil Premium.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 It is still too early to see the full impact of the pupil premium. What we can do is see the difference it is making to the lives of the individual pupils. The three case studies illustrate this well as without the additional funding the outcomes could have been very different.

8 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS / EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT / STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES / CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None

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