

## Pupil premium grant guidance for governors

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### Introduction

The pupil premium is additional funding for schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities and to close the gaps between them and their peers.

In the 2016 to 2017 financial year, schools have received the following funding for each child registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years:

- £1,320 for pupils in Reception to Year 6
- £935 for pupils in Year 7 to Year 11

Schools will also receive £1,900 for each pupil identified in the Spring school census as having left LA care because of one of the following reasons:

- Adoption
- A special guardianship order
- A child arrangements order
- A residence order

### What constitutes a 'disadvantaged pupil'?

School leaders and governors must have a clear strategy for supporting children who come from socio-economic backgrounds which may produce challenges to their education. Leaders must not assume that all disadvantaged children are likely to be less able, in fact, many disadvantaged pupils have the potential to be considered as more able, but often, the pupil's home circumstances prevent them reaching their potential. School leaders and governors must identify the barriers that are preventing a disadvantaged pupil from attaining further.

### Ensuring that all disadvantaged pupils are identified

Although all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 now receive free school meals as part of the government's universal infant free school meal provision, this does not mean that any child automatically qualifies for the pupil premium.

Parents must still apply for free school meals via their local council. Schools must communicate this to all parents clearly. Exemplary practice from schools often highlights the

impact of the pupil premium grant spending; many schools use the spending to support breakfast and after school clubs, which have a real, positive impact on low income families.

Leaders must ensure that, throughout the school year, they closely support low income parents – by highlighting the current impact in the school newsletter or website, the school can effectively raise the profile.

Many schools have identified school family support workers as the pupil premium champion – their role is very important in engaging and talking to families. Exemplary practice has highlighted ‘open mornings’, in which schools host a range of external agencies from the local community, one of which could be the local council benefits team, as an effective method of identifying pupils that are entitled to the grant. Schools should also consider the use of bilingual staff supporting parents with English as an additional language (EAL).

## **The impact of the pupil premium grant**

School leaders and governors must have a clear strategy for identifying all the barriers that are preventing disadvantaged pupils from achieving as well as their peers. Once they have identified the barriers they must put in place a strategy which will enable the disadvantaged pupil to succeed. It is no longer acceptable to say that the grant is used for extra adult support, as often this strategy has the least impact.

School leaders must have the data available to show that the extra funding is having an impact. The gap in attainment needs to be narrowing to show that the grant is being used effectively. Highly effective schools that have put the pupil premium grant to good use have a range of data to show that any gap in attainment is very low, and some provide data to show that a disadvantaged child often outperforms their peers.

## **Using national data to compare the performance of disadvantaged pupils**

Ofsted in particular focusses on the performance of disadvantaged pupils; however, a key change is that they now not only focus on the attainment of disadvantaged pupils against their peers in the school, but also against national comparisons of all pupils. This important change now challenges all schools to focus on narrowing the difference of attainment against national benchmarks.

Leaders and governors need to have a clear understanding of the performance of all pupils nationally but, more importantly, they must compare the performance of disadvantaged pupils against the national benchmarks. Previously, school leaders would compare disadvantaged pupils’ performance against national disadvantaged pupils’ performance; schools now need to close the gap against national non-disadvantaged pupils, and are judged by Ofsted on how effectively they perform against this national data.

## **Review of the effectiveness of pupil premium grant**

Highly effective schools regularly have a pupil premium review to look at how the school is spending its pupil premium funding. The purpose of the review is to improve the school’s pupil premium strategy, so that the funding is used effectively on approaches shown to be effective in improving the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The reviewer will be an

independent, experienced leader with a track record of making these improvements for disadvantaged pupils and will help the school to further improve better outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

The thorough review is strong evidence to support the effectiveness of the school and, in particular, the effectiveness of how leaders are supporting disadvantaged pupils. This evidence can be used by governors to hold leaders to account. For schools with large numbers of disadvantaged pupils, this independent review can help the school to effectively plan the next steps for further improvement.