

PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING

Background

1. Members on the panel suggested a discussion take place on how we can ensure that PEF interventions are selected that are based on sound research and pedagogy, allow for appropriate measurement of the impact they are having, and report on the outcomes for young people.

Discussion

2. Some of the range of measures Scottish Government are employing to address these issues are set out below.

2.1 PEF National Operational Guidance

An updated version of the National Operational Guidance was published in February 2018. The guidance states that there must be a “clear rationale for use of the funding, based on a clear contextual analysis which identifies the poverty related attainment gap” and “plans must be grounded in evidence”. The guidance further states that schools must have plans in place to evaluate the impact of the funding. The guidance also provides information on monitoring and reporting, and evaluation.

2.2 Education Scotland National Improvement Hub

A framework, ‘Interventions for Equity,’ has been developed to support the planning and implementing of interventions and approaches to meet the needs of children and young people affected by poverty in order to close the attainment gap. Further exemplars of PEF are planned, and there is currently a social media campaign #PEFSCOT18 where schools are sharing examples of work being undertaken with PEF.

2.3 Education Endowment Foundation Toolkit

The Scottish version of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Teaching and Learning Toolkit has been integrated into the National Improvement Hub. This EEF Toolkit provides an accessible summary of educational research designed to inform discussions on the most effective approaches to improving attainment, with a focus on 5-16 year olds and poverty disadvantage. It contains 34 teaching approaches and interventions, each summarised in terms of their average impact on attainment, the strength of the evidence supporting them and their cost. It is useful for education leaders and practitioners to inform decision making on the use of Pupil Equity Funding, raising attainment and improving equity. It is intended to be used in conjunction with the range of interventions and approaches provided through the framework above to encourage and enhance professional dialogue taking full account of the local context.

2.4 Evaluation Strategy

We have committed to evaluate the Attainment Scotland Fund, with the interim report due to be published shortly. The evaluation of the Attainment Scotland Fund gathers data from a broad range of sources, and for the final report we will undertake the specific research activities to fill gaps in our knowledge base regarding PEF, including surveys and case studies.

2.5 Inspections

School inspection and other review processes will be used where necessary to ensure schools use their funding appropriately. 'How Good Is Our School? 4' includes an evaluation on the six point scale of the school's success in raising attainment and achievement and ways in which they can demonstrate improvements to equity for all learners. In addition, the operation, use and effectiveness of the Pupil Equity Funding in closing the poverty related attainment gap at a local authority level will feed into other existing quality assurance processes, such as Audit Scotland's Shared Risk Assessment.

2.6 Measuring the attainment gap

The Scottish Government has made clear its commitment to closing the poverty-related attainment gap between children and young people from the least and most disadvantaged communities. Ministers are committed to making demonstrable progress in closing the gap during the lifetime of this Parliament, and to substantially eliminate it in the next decade. In line with the commitment set out in the 2017 NIF & Improvement Plan, we have worked with key stakeholders to explore and agree what specific measures were felt to drive improvement most usefully across all stages of a child or young person's life. This has led to the development of a basket of 11 key measures to measure the gap and allow us to monitor if progress is being made.

Conclusion

3. Scottish Government would be keen to hear your thoughts on whether these are sufficient, and any other measures you feel should be put in place to support teachers, and ensure PEF is used to achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people.

**Learning Directorate
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