



## **EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 24/09/2019**

**SUBJECT: FREE SCHOOL MEALS (FSM) STRATEGY**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION & CORPORATE SERVICES**

---

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To outline the education strategy that aims to further improve the attainment of pupils in receipt of free school meals (FSM).

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report summarises the revised strategy to improve the attainment of this group of pupils. The strategy recognises the need to accelerate improvement taking account of local and national data. The document includes the following areas:

- Effective use of grant funding;
- The role of schools in raising attainment;
- The role of the Local Authority in raising attainment;
- The role of parents/carers;
- The role of other partners.

The strategy also recognises that some pupils, in receipt of free school meals, attain in line or above the expected level at all stages of education from Early Years to end of Key Stage 5. However, the document aims to ensure that all pupils, regardless of prior attainment, make very good progress throughout their school education. In addition to sharpening accountability processes in place to monitor, track and evaluate the progress of this group of learners, the document identifies the establishment of a new 'Pupil Aspiration Board' which aims to specify and share the very best practice taking place across Caerphilly Schools.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To ensure that Members are fully informed of the revised strategy for improving the attainment, achievement and provision for pupils eligible for free school meals.
- 4.2 Members will be able to monitor the progress of this group of learners and ascertain the impact of the revised strategy.

## 5. THE REPORT

5.1 20.3% percent of Caerphilly pupils on roll of statutory school age are entitled to free school meals (taken from Pupil Level Annual School Census 2018), ranking the authority 20th out of the 22 local authorities in Wales.

5.2 Attendance of FSM pupils in secondary schools has consistently been below the Welsh average. However, in 2018 it was above the Welsh average (Caerphilly – 89.8% vs Wales – 89.6%)

Attendance of FSM pupils in primary schools has generally been below the Welsh average. However, in 2018 it was in line with the Welsh average (Caerphilly – 92.2% vs 92.1%).

The number of days lost to exclusions for FSM pupils in the secondary phase has steadily increased over time. However, there has been a slight reduction in 2019. The number of fixed term exclusions for FSM pupils has also increased.

5.3 Performance at the end of Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 compares favourably to the Welsh average. However, performance at the end of Key Stage 3 compares unfavourably.

Performance of FSM pupils at Key Stage 4 in the Level 2+ indicator has been consistently below the Welsh average. In 2018, it was 24% compared to 29.4%. However, the Level 2+ indicator is broadly in line with an LA with similar numbers of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

Performance of FSM pupils at Key Stage 4 in the English measure has been consistently below the Welsh average. In 2018, it was 34.3% compared to 38.7%. It was also below the LAs with similar numbers of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

Performance of FSM pupils at Key Stage 4 in the Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> language measure has improved over time. In 2018, it was above the Welsh average (53.3% vs. 46.9%)

Performance of FSM pupils at Key Stage 4 in the mathematics measure (best of maths or numeracy) has been consistently below the Welsh average. In 2018, it was 36.9% vs 39.3%. However, over three years, it has been broadly above the LA with similar numbers of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

For the last two years, the Capped 9 measure has been below the Welsh average. In 2018, it was 277.05 compared to 291.13. It was also below the LA with similar number of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

5.4 To achieve the LA's ambition it is recognised that new approaches and refined systems are required across Caerphilly, if there is going to be a significant improvement in narrowing attainment gaps and improving life chances for FSM pupils. This strategy aims, therefore, to support the development of robust processes and partnerships, identify good practice and ensure the effective use of all available resources.

In its initial year, the strategy will largely focus on the quality of teaching and provision in schools, alongside initiatives to increase attendance and reduce the number of exclusions.

The accompanying appendix contains the FSM Strategy, detailing the scale of ambition to improve the performance of this group of learners.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No related assumptions have been felt to be necessary in relation to this report.

## **7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES**

7.1 The Caerphilly Council corporate plan (including Well-being objective – Improve education opportunities for all) identifies the following targets linked to the attainment and achievement of FSM:

- Aim to reduce the impact of poverty within early years
- Continued delivery of the Flying Start programme to help improve access, take up and attendance
- Continued delivery of the Families First programme to help improve access, take up and attendance
- Reduce impact of poverty on attainment for both vocational and non-vocational qualifications to provide equality of opportunity
- More effectively track progress of vulnerable groups and monitor impact of interventions on outcomes
- Increase engagement and support for young people who are at risk of or are currently NEET to secure destinations and realise their potential.

7.3 The Shared Ambitions strategy identifies the Local Authority's commitment to improving attainment for all pupils, as well as outlining how this will be achieved in partnership with the Education Achievement Service and schools. The document identifies a series of action points to address the differential in attainment between FSM and non-FSM pupils.

7.4 The Service Improvement Plan is an annual document that coordinates the strategic direction of all services across the education directorate through a series of action plans. In 2019, the service improvement plan identified the need to improve the attainment of vulnerable groups, including FSM pupils. Objectives set in the plan are monitored on a termly basis.

## **8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

8.1 The Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 makes reference to the following:

- A healthier Wales, supporting vulnerable learners can improve their well-being and educational achievement;
- A more equal Wales, a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background is;
- A Wales of cohesive communities, improving quality of life with attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities.

## **9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Equality Impact Assessment is not required because the report is presenting an updated strategy that does not impact on current partnership working.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no financial implications with respect to this report.

## **11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no personal implications with respect to this report.

## **12. CONSULTATIONS**

12.2 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

## **13. STATUTORY POWER**

13.1 Local Government Act 1972.

Author: Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement

E-mail: [warrep1@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:warrep1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Consultees:

Christina Harrhy, Interim Chief Executive  
Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services  
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services  
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer  
Sue Richards, Head of Service – Education Planning & Strategy  
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion & ALN  
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager  
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager  
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair Education for Life Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Carol Andrews, Vice Chair Education for Life Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Philippa Marsden, Cabinet Member for Education and Achievement  
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)  
Debbie Hartevelde, Education Achievement Service  
Ros Roberts, Performance Management  
Rob Tranter, Legal Services  
Steve Harris, Interim Head of Business Improvement Services

Appendix 1: Strategy for improving the attainment, achievement and provision for pupils eligible for free school meals.

**Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Corfforaethol**

**Directorate of Education and Corporate Services**

# **Strategy for improving the attainment, achievement and provision for pupils eligible for free school meals 2018 – 2019**



A greener place  
Man gwyrddach



## Contents

1. Introduction
2. Links to wider educational strategy
  - i. Caerphilly Local Authority corporate plan 2018-23
  - ii. Shared Ambitions
  - iii. Service Improvement Plan
  - iv. Self-evaluation processes
  - v. EAS Business Plan
3. Creating a strategy informed by research
  - i. Pre-school research
  - i. Evidence of the impact of deprivation on outcomes
  - ii. Effective school strategies
4. Effective use of grant funding
  - i. Pupil Deprivation Grant
  - ii. Looked After Pupil Development Grant
  - iii. Early Years Pupil Development Grant
  - iv. PDG Access Fund
  - v. Additional funding opportunities
5. Role of schools
  - i. Leadership
  - ii. Culture, ambition and aspiration
  - iii. Teaching and learning
  - iv. Enrichment activities
6. Role of the Local Authority – operational activities
  - i. Educational Welfare Service
  - i. Inclusion Services
  - ii. Youth Services
  - iii. NEETS
  - iv. Healthy Schools
  - v. Finance
  - vi. Music Service
  - vii. Early Years
  - viii. Safeguarding
  - ix. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools
  - x. Recruitment
  - xi. EOTAS
  - xii. Library Services
  - xiii. IT Services
  - xiv. Education Data Team
7. Role of parents/carers
8. Role of other partners
9. Accountability processes with regards to the performance of FSM
  - i. Self-evaluation
  - i. Schools Causing Concern meetings

- ii. Local Authority Quality Assurance meetings
- iii. Service Improvement Plan
- iv. Education Scrutiny meetings
- v. Estyn

10. How will we know the strategy is successful?

Appendix 1: the Caerphilly profile of FSM learners (all data based on statutory school age)

## 1. Introduction

*'Breaking the cycle of poverty and disadvantage is paramount, and at the heart of our national mission to raise standards for all our learners.'*

Kirsty Williams 6 April 2019, WG Release

This document is our updated and revised strategy, and recognises that our FSM learners are children and young people who are vulnerable to poorer outcomes because of the barriers presented by poverty. The strategy identifies what has been achieved to date, priorities going forward and is intended to close the educational achievement gaps for this group of vulnerable pupils. It also sets out examples of good practice in schools and the most effective strategies that are having some impact in narrowing achievement gaps and promoting greater social mobility. The strategy is aligned to the key objectives of Welsh Government and the Education Achievement Service (EAS), providing a direct link between national, regional and local aspirations

The education directorate has a duty to ensure that all pupils achieve success and experience positive outcomes, irrespective of background. The circumstances of a child's birth and the family's social and economic conditions can determine success in the education system and workplace. Social mobility does not mean that only more able FSM pupils should be supported to realise their potential, but that all children and young people who experience disadvantage should be helped to make much better progress than many of them currently achieve.

Integral to the success of this strategy will be a relentless ambition for all senior leaders across the Local Authority to ensure good progress and high expectations for FSM learners. Effective educational leaders set high aspirations for all FSM pupils and create a high quality inclusive learning environment, targeting resources and interventions to ensure maximum impact, so that gaps narrow and outcomes and destinations are more positive.

A key national policy has been the implementation of the Pupil Development Grant, with the expectation that this funding will be used effectively to raise attainment for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and thereby close achievement gaps between these pupils and their peers.

This strategy aims to prioritise and coordinate all the effective approaches and activities across our services, schools and early years settings that are focused on ensuring every child and young person in Caerphilly achieves their full potential.

### **The Caerphilly context**

There are significant levels of deprivation within the Local Authority with 29.7% of statutory school age pupils living in 20% of the most disadvantaged areas in Wales. 14 of the 110 areas in the Caerphilly county borough are in the top 10% of the most disadvantaged areas in Wales. 20.3% percent of Caerphilly pupils on roll of statutory school age are entitled to free school meals (taken from Pupil Level Annual School Census 2018), ranking the authority 20th out of the 22 local authorities in Wales.

Although the percentage of learners living in workless households within Caerphilly county borough has decreased, the percentage remains higher than the Wales average and is the second highest amongst local authorities in South East Wales.

Caerphilly County Borough Council is committed to tackling the causes of poverty and ensures the five anti-poverty grant programmes are working collaboratively to maximise reach to the most vulnerable.

The size of this challenge is clear from the evidence given below:

Attendance of FSM pupils in primary schools has generally been below the Welsh average. However, in 2018 it was in line with the Welsh average (Caerphilly – 92.2% vs 92.1%).

Attendance of FSM pupils in secondary schools has consistently been below the Welsh average. However, in 2018 it was above the Welsh average (Caerphilly – 89.8% vs Wales – 89.6%)

The number of days lost to exclusions for FSM pupils in the primary phase has steadily increased from 176.5 days in 2013 to 298.5 days in 2018. However, there has been a slight reduction in 2019 to 273.5 days.

The number of days lost to exclusions for FSM pupils in the secondary phase has steadily increased from 181 days in 2013 to 1212 days in 2018. There has been a slight reduction in 2019 to 930.5 days. The number of fixed term exclusions for FSM pupils has increased from 63 in 2013 to 348 in 2018.

Performance at the end of Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 compares favourably to the Welsh average. However, performance at the end of Key Stage 3 compares unfavourably.

Performance of FSM pupils at Key Stage 4 in the Level 2+ indicator has been consistently below the Welsh average. In 2018, it was 24% compared to 29.4%. However, the Level 2+ indicator is broadly in line with an LA with similar numbers of pupils in receipt of free school meals (Merthyr Tydfil LA).

Performance of FSM pupils at Key Stage 4 in the English measure has been consistently below the Welsh average. In 2018, it was 34.2% compared to 38.7%. It was also below the LA with similar numbers of pupils in receipt of free school meals (Merthyr Tydfil LA – 36.9%).

Performance of FSM pupils at Key Stage 4 in the Welsh 1<sup>st</sup> language measure has improved over time. In 2018, it was above the Welsh average (53.3% vs. 46.9%).

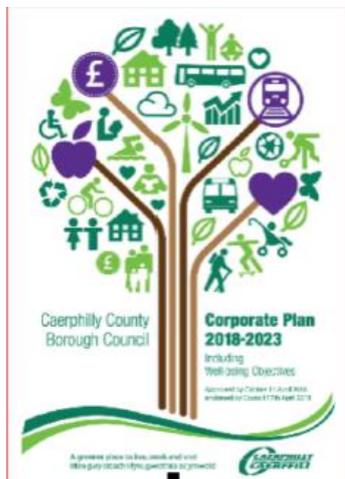
Performance of FSM pupils at Key Stage 4 in the mathematics measure (best of maths or numeracy) has been consistently below the Welsh average. In 2018, it was 36.9% vs 39.3%. However, over three years, it has been broadly above the LA with similar numbers of pupils in receipt of free school meals (Merthyr Tydfil LA).

For the last two years, the Capped 9 measure has been below the Welsh average. In 2018, it was 277.05 compared to 291.13. It was also below the LA with similar number of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

To deliver this ambition it is recognised that further work, new approaches and systems are required across Caerphilly, if there is going to be a significant improvement in narrowing attainment gaps and improving life chances for FSM pupils. This strategy aims, therefore, to support the development of robust processes and partnerships, identify good practice and ensure the effective use of all available resources.

## 2. Links to wider educational strategies

### i. Caerphilly Council Wellbeing Objectives 2018-23



In March 2018, Caerphilly Council adopted a set of Wellbeing Objectives for 2018-2023 within its Corporate Plan. The 'council has a statutory duty to set Well-being Objectives using the five sustainable development principles under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015'.

The Corporate Plan is the Council's over-arching vision, supported by clear objectives and priorities. Within the Plan, "Improve education opportunities for all" was selected as Wellbeing Objective 1. The corporate plan identifies the following targets linked to the attainment and achievement of FSM:

Aim to reduce the impact of poverty within early years

- Continued delivery of the Flying Start programme to help improve access, take up and attendance.
- Continued delivery of the Families First programme to help improve access, take up and attendance.
- Increase the number of eligible working families accessing the free Childcare Offer.

Reduce impact of poverty on attainment for both vocational and non-vocational qualifications to provide equality of opportunity

- More effectively track progress of vulnerable groups and monitor impact of interventions on outcomes.
- Develop the role of person centred practice (PCP) champion and embed person centred practice in targeted schools.
- Increase engagement and support for young people who are at risk of or are currently NEET to secure destinations and realise their potential.
- Reconfigure the core Youth Service to ensure that young people with the most need are supported to achieve, whether by formal or non-formal means.

### ii. Shared Ambitions



Shared Ambitions  
Working together to achieve the  
best outcomes for our young people  
2019-2022



The Shared Ambitions strategy identifies the Local Authority's commitment to improving attainment for all pupils, as well as outlining how this will be achieved in partnership with the Education Achievement Service and schools. The document identifies a series of action points to address the differential in attainment between FSM and non-FSM pupils:

**Target for Improvement:  
Improve the outcomes of pupils identified as e-FSM across all phases of education.**

Actions by schools:

- Ensure an appropriate focused profile in school, e.g., SLT, Governing Body agendas etc.
- Employ a multi-agency approach towards improving provision.
- Develop and enhance mentoring programmes.
- Identify appropriate staff to support, e.g., family, engagement officer, learning coach.

- Provide bespoke enrichment experiences as appropriate.
- Review target setting processes for this group of pupils.

#### Actions by Local Authority:

- LA to explore increasing access to free school meal application.
- Work within Council departments to develop a comprehensive work experience programme, with prioritisation for this group of learners.
- Increase the access to the Music service and other enrichment programmes.
- Maximise funding streams to promote engagement in extra curricular activities.
- Celebrate achievements, particularly of those in EOTAS settings.
- Challenge targets for this group through Intervention Planning meetings and Education Improvement Boards.

#### Actions by Education Achievement Service:

- Facilitate half-termly professional learning sessions with the nominated school leads for vulnerable learners in each secondary school, with a focus on improving identification, tracking and target setting, provision and pace of progress for vulnerable learners.
- Embed the professional learning opportunities for governors on challenging the use and impact of the pupil development grant and other allocated resource on the progress and outcomes of vulnerable learners.

### iii. Service Improvement Plan 2019



The Service Improvement Plan is an annual document that coordinates the strategic direction of all services across the education directorate through a series of action plans.

In 2019, the service improvement plan identified the need to improve the attainment of vulnerable groups, including FSM pupils. Objectives set in the plan are monitored on a termly basis through the SIP monitoring and evaluation document.

Targets relating to FSM in the current Service Improvement Plan include:

**Data and systems:** Improve collection, tracking and monitoring of data with reference to FSM pupils. Make effective use of the data to improve performance of vulnerable pupils.

**Attendance:** Improve tracking, monitoring of attendance data with reference to FSM pupils. Make effective use of the data to improve attendance of this vulnerable group. Reduce the number of excluded related to FSM pupils.

**Early Years:** Improve tracking, monitoring and responding – vulnerable groups (children living in the most disadvantaged households likely to be FSM when they reach school age).

**Music Service:** Improve tracking and monitoring of data with reference to FSM pupils. Make effective use of the data to improve performance of this vulnerable group.

#### iv. Caerphilly Local Authority Self Evaluation Processes

Cyfrastran Addysg a Addysg Gyfnewydd  
Directorate of Education and Lifelong Learning

### Self-Evaluation Policy

Author	Paul Warren
Consultees	EMT
Passed by SMT (Date)	
Published (Date)	
Next Review (Date)	



Caerphilly LA self evaluation is a cyclical process that aims to provide an evidence base upon which to arrive at judgements about pupil outcomes and progress, quality of provision and the effectiveness of leadership and management of Education Services. Outcomes from the self-evaluation support the targets and actions in the Shared Ambitions and Service Improvement Plan documents. The current summary identifies the following areas for improvement:

- Improve the performance of boys and pupils identified as e-FSM across all phases of education. Work alongside school improvement partners to implement a series of measures to increase accountability for all stakeholders.
- Refine current procedures to monitor and track 'risk' pupils to ensure that all categories of vulnerability are taken into account. Work alongside school improvement partners to monitor, challenge and support schools in order to raise attainment for these students.

#### v. EAS Business Plan 2018-21

The EAS Business Plan 2018-21, the regional strategic plan for accelerating educational outcomes, identifies the strategies to raise the attainment of FSM pupils.

The plan identifies the following target:

**Continue to raise aspiration, improving pupil outcomes, particularly for groups of vulnerable learners (FSM, gender, EAL, more able (MA) and LAC) by:**

- Ensuring that the regional school improvement strategy is based upon evidence-based research.
- Ensuring that all schools and settings receive high-quality, bespoke support in line with their needs, to accelerate progress and improve outcomes.
- Supporting and challenging the quality and accuracy of school planning and self-evaluation.
- Continuing to work closely with LAs (as appropriate with Diocesan Directors) to ensure a more consistent approach in the use of statutory powers to accelerate progress in schools.
- Further developing pupil-level target setting and progress measures for all learners and groups of learners across all key stages.
- Collecting progress towards targets information through a differentiated approach, using a range of first-hand evidence to verify submitted data.



### **3. Evidence based research**

#### **i. Pre-school research**

The 'Effective Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education' project (EPPSE 3-16+) research considered how children's outcomes are influenced by preschool experience and makes a persuasive argument that early investment can pay long term dividends. It is a longitudinal study following children through their preschool experiences at 3 years and throughout their childhood to analyse the impact beyond compulsory education. Going to high quality preschool influenced both attainment and progress in early school careers and set children on particularly beneficial learning trajectories, especially if they came from more disadvantaged backgrounds. It cannot however, do this in isolation. To improve outcomes for children they need supportive families with stimulating home learning environments, high quality preschool provision, followed by effective primary and secondary school. (EPPSE 3-16+ Research Brief, June 2015, B Taggart et al). This research forms a fundamental basis for the development and implementation of the Flying Start programme as well as other childcare developments.

'Early Childhood Education and Care' (ECEC) (Dallimore, 2019) is currently receiving additional focus in Welsh Government, with research papers starting to inform Senedd Research and build a concept to shape future delivery in Wales. The introductory briefing highlights practice / research both nationally and internationally, emphasises the importance of earning and education starting from birth, and poses questions for Ministers to consider when developing the future policy shaping the direction of our ECEC system.

#### **ii. Research identifying the impact of poverty on Key Stage 4 qualifications**

'Missing Talent' (Allen, 2015) is a Sutton Trust research project that investigated 7,000 pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who scored in the top 10% nationally at the end of primary school but received a set of GCSE results placing them outside the top 25%. The report suggests that a third (36%) of bright but disadvantaged boys underachieve at the end of Key Stage 4. More able but poor girls are slightly less likely to underperform, with just under a quarter (24%) getting disappointing GCSE results. These figures compare with 16% of boys and 9% of girls from economically advantaged families who similarly fall behind by age 16.

The report concludes that being from an economically disadvantaged background more than doubles the chance of missing out on top GCSE grades. This means that bright disadvantaged pupils will on average score 4As and 4Bs while their equally able classmates from better off backgrounds achieve 8As. One in ten of the poorer but more able pupils barely achieve C grades, lagging behind their more-advantaged peers by almost a whole GCSE grade per subject.

#### **iii. School strategies**

'Key stage 3: the wasted years' (Ofsted, 2015) identifies the ineffective use of grant funding, particularly at Key Stage 3. The reports indicates that additional support was often focused on intervention activities in Key Stage 4, which often sought to compensate for ineffective practice in the earlier years of secondary education.

'Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils: articulating success and good practice' (November 2015) considered that the most effective strategies to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils focused on teaching and learning, with specific focus on paired or small group additional teaching; improving feedback; and one-to-one tuition. The research identified seven areas that would lead a school to improved outcomes for learners:

- Promote an ethos of attainment for all pupils, rather than stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as a group with less potential to succeed.

- Have an individualised approach to addressing barriers to learning and emotional support, at an early stage, rather than providing access to generic support and focusing on pupils nearing their end-of-key-stage assessments.
- Focus on high quality teaching first rather than on bolt-on strategies and activities outside school hours.
- Focus on outcomes for individual pupils rather than on providing strategies.
- Deploy the best staff to support disadvantaged pupils; develop skills and roles of teachers and TAs rather than using additional staff who do not know the pupils well.
- Make decisions based on data and respond to evidence, using frequent, rather than one-off assessment and decision points.
- Have clear, responsive leadership: setting ever higher aspirations and devolving responsibility for raising attainment to all staff, rather than accepting low aspirations and variable performance.

#### **4. Effective use of grant funding**

The Education Achievement Service operate and monitor the grants on behalf of the local authority. T

##### **i. The pupil development grant**

The Pupil Development Grant (previously the 'Pupil Deprivation Grant') is intended to support schools to overcome the additional barriers that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds face which prevent them from attaining as well as their peers, whatever their ability.

The total number of pupils that benefit from the Pupil Development Grant in Caerphilly 2019-20 is 5126. This includes 1968 secondary pupils, 2850 primary pupils, 40 special school pupils and 268 middle school, and 0 pupils attending pupil referral units (PRUs). Although there has been some individual improvements in the attainment of this group of children, particularly at the end of foundation phase and Year 6, we have yet to see the full impact of this resource.

Recent updates to the grant by Welsh Government have included:

- Commitment to fund pupils who require additional support via e-FSM or who are looked after in primary and secondary schools at a rate of £600 per learner for 2019-20;
- Extending funding to learners who are in EOTAS, rather than just those who are in pupil referral units;
- Aspiration for 60% of PDG being invested at key stage 3 to address barriers to learning.

As part of the Local Authority self-evaluation process, the following statements are used to evaluate the impact of the distribution of PDG across schools on pupil outcomes:

- What arrangements are in place to monitor the performance, progress and wellbeing of FSM pupils?
- How do we compare the performance of FSM pupils with other similar authorities and national data?
- What is the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals within the authority at each stage of learning?
- Is data used strategically to improve provision and outcomes for FSM pupils? If so how?
- What is the overall strategy? How does the authority ensure that this strategy reaches the schools? Is this limited to a few schools or is this strategy well-understood by all?
- How effective is the FSM strategy and what impact is it having on outcomes for pupils?
- How does the person with responsibility for monitoring the FSM performance evaluate the impact of the work undertaken by the EAS?

- How does the LA ensure that all schools get the support and challenge they need in relation to improving provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils?
- What is the quality of professional support schools receive from the EAS in improving outcomes?
- What are the rates of persistent absence amongst FSM pupils? How effectively does the authority monitor these? How effectively does the authority challenge and support schools to reduce rates of persistent absence amongst FSM pupils?
- How is the PDG used to support EOTAS pupils?
- What arrangements are in place to improve family and community engagement in your schools?
- What support do pupils receive at key stage 3? How are you supporting/challenging schools to spend in accordance with the 60%/40% split?
- How effective are the research partnerships undertaken by the EAS? What has happened as a result?

## **ii. The LAC pupil development grant**

The 'Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children' is used by the regional education consortia to strategically deliver better targeted and flexible interventions on a regional basis. The funding also supports interventions aimed at former looked after children who have been adopted from care or are subject to a special guardianship order. This strategy looks specifically at the outcomes

Although the strategic planning responsibility for the LAC PDG lies with the regional consortium, the Local Authority is the corporate parent.

As part of the Local Authority self-evaluation process, the following statements are used to evaluate the impact of the distribution of LAC PDG across schools:

- What arrangements are in place to monitor the performance, progress and wellbeing of FSM LAC pupils?
- What is the performance of LAC FSM pupils at each stage of learning?
- How effective is the FSM LAC strategy and what impact is it having on outcomes for pupils?
- How does the person with responsibility for monitoring the FSM LAC performance evaluate the impact of the work undertaken by the EAS?
- How does the LA ensure that all schools get the support and challenge they need in relation to improving provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils?
- What is the quality of professional support schools receive from the EAS in improving outcomes?
- How effective are the research partnerships undertaken by the EAS? What has happened as a result?

## **iii. The early years pupil development grant**

The Early Years PDG extends allocated funding to pupils in nursery and reception classes in funded Foundation Phase education. As with the PDG, the aim of the Early Years PDG is to accelerate the rate of attainment of children of all abilities from low income households to help them reach their full potential. Regional consortia are responsible for ensuring that the grant is used for the purposes for which it is intended.

The schools EY PDG is administered in conjunction with their main PDG amount and monitored accordingly. Although there are similar levels of allocation and monitoring within Early Years Education non-maintained childcare settings, there is a greater involvement from the local authority early years team in supporting and administering the grant.

Recent updates to the grant by Welsh Government have included:

- Increasing the Early Years PDG to £179,000 for learners in the Foundation Phase across the South East Wales consortia region; the Caerphilly apportioned amount for the Pupil Development Grant is £36,268 with an additional Education Improvement Grant (EIG) of £8,885. The allocation is calculated based on where the setting is located and the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. The more disadvantaged an area being served by the setting, the more funding the setting receives.
- Extending the availability of PDG to support three year old looked after children who are in the Foundation Phase at the same rate as all other looked after learners.

As part of the Local Authority self-evaluation process, the following statements are used to evaluate the impact of the distribution of the EY PDG across schools and childcare settings delivering the funded Foundation Phase places:

- How effectively do schools use the grant funding for disadvantaged pupils and how does the Local Authority know?
- What are the arrangements to monitor the quality and effectiveness of plans to spend the PDG? Do you monitor any evaluations of previous grant spending?
- What happens if a school does not use the funding appropriately?
- How is good practice identified and shared? Examples?
- Are there any arrangements to support schools with smaller amounts of grant funding to work collaboratively to maximise the impact of funding?
- What is the Local Authority admissions information identifying about FSM pupils when they begin school? How is this information utilised?

#### **iv. The PDG access fund**

The PDG Access grant provides assistance for the purchase of:

- School uniform including coats and shoes;
- School sports kit including footwear;
- Uniform for enrichment activities, including but not limited to, scouts, guides, cadets, martial arts; sports; performing arts or dance;
- Equipment e.g. school bags and stationery;
- Specialist equipment where new curriculum activities begin such as design and technology; and
- Equipment for out of hours trips such as outdoor learning e.g. waterproofs.

This funding is available to pupils who are eligible for free school meals:

- Reception class of maintained primary schools in September 2019;
- Year 3 class of maintained primary schools in September 2019;
- Year 7 of maintained secondary schools in September 2019;
- Year 10 of maintained secondary schools in September 2019;
- Pupils in special schools, special needs resource bases and pupil referral units who are entering Reception, Year 3, Year 7 and Year 10 in September 2019.

The funding is available to all looked after children of compulsory school age, irrespective of FSM entitlement. Funding of up to £125 is available for each learner with the exception of those in Year 7. Eligible learners in Year 7 will be entitled to a maximum of £200.

'PDG Access Grant' funding is given directly to families. The Local Authority is committed to ensuring that parents/carers are aware of the fund and receive support in completing the relevant application where appropriate. The Local Authority is also committed to developing a fund with more sustainable long term options.

#### **v. Additional funding opportunities**

The Local Authority aims to make best use of Welsh Government grants that are intended to benefit FSM pupils. For example, the criteria for the 'Reduction of Infant Class Sizes' grant makes reference to schools with 'significant levels of free school meals'. This is taken into account when selecting the most appropriate schools for the grant.

There are many grants through Welsh Government and European Social Fund that may not directly impact FSM learners but play a significant role in mitigating the impact of poverty, or improving the outcomes of vulnerable learners to achieve better outcomes and therefore break the cycle of poverty / FSM.

The Children and Communities Grant comprises seven programmes, all of which aim to mitigate the impact of poverty total £9,742,237 for the borough:

- Flying Start works preschool in targeted areas of disadvantage and therefore high FSM numbers. The programme aims to support child development through quality interventions, early identify child or family needs, reduce or prevent children entering the care system, and mitigate the impact of poverty through improved parental and child outcomes.
- Families First is an early intervention programme to support families with multiple needs to break the cycle of vulnerability including poverty. The programme aims to offer bespoke tailor made interventions with families to improve child development outcomes, improve families' resilience, move adults towards the employability programmes by addressing their primary family needs e.g. mental health and wellbeing, routines, school engagement, or behaviours.
- Legacy programme is about community empowerment and coproduction as well as raising aspirations and is targeted at our most disadvantaged communities.
- Employability programmes cover the whole borough through a range of Welsh Government and ESF funding programmes with referrals to a single front door for triage to ensure all adults and young people have access to the right training / employment support needed. The aim is to move people into employment as well as to support qualifications / upskilling to improve employment prospects / increase wages or security.
- Childcare Offer (£2,798,000) funds childcare places for 3-4 year olds who are in part time Foundation Phase of eligible working parents earning less than £100,000 per year. While this grant is not aimed at children who are FSM, it does remove childcare as a barrier for economically inactive parents and encourages parents to work at least 16 hours per week to become eligible. There are a significant number of applications from households who are not affluent and may be near the thresholds for FSM. This funded childcare place enables more money in the household income which supports enrichment activities that previously would not have been possible as they were just about managing the monthly budget. Currently the offset of childcare costs for parents is more than £250,000 per month.
- School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) is a targeted programme in schools with high FSM percentages. The programme combines two healthy meals per day, nutrition sessions and physical activity for three weeks of the school holidays. The current funding is £5,000 per school for up to 40 children.

## **5. The role of schools**

### **i. Leadership**

Leaders in schools that have had an impact in raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils know that there is no one single strategy which leads to success. Rather, effective school leaders, including governors, create a vision and culture, consistently communicated to staff, pupils and parents, in which the highest possible achievement of every learner is a priority and an expectation. Leaders in these schools have a resolute determination that every learner regardless of home background or starting point will succeed and they both enable and hold staff to account to achieve this. They know their schools and the needs of individual learners and use data to analyse trends, set targets and then implement the intervention strategies which will have the most impact on accelerating rates of progress.

The Sutton Trust highlights the importance of a designated senior leader and governor who have a clear overview of how funding is being allocated, including Pupil Development Grant funding, and the difference it is making to the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

## **ii. Culture – ambition and aspiration**

Despite significant research into the range of vulnerable learner strategies adopted by schools and the use of the Pupil Development Grant, it is clear that there is no one single intervention that has led to success. Furthermore, schools need to develop a number of bespoke measures tailored to each school's circumstance.

The most effective and ambitious schools are those that are open to outside influences, welcome challenge, are reflective and self-evaluative, are keen to share their good practices with others, work collaboratively to support, and benefit from, the work of other schools and agencies and are actively seeking to learn from best practice elsewhere.

Promoting a growth culture or mindset in schools which drives the belief that all children can do better than expected, makes a significant difference. Where schools act on the basis that all pupils' innate abilities and aptitudes can be improved with the right support, and that they do not give up on any child, it is more likely to get the engagement and effort by all children to do well. Changing learners' mindsets about their own ability and the value of education itself is also crucial to improving outcomes for vulnerable learners. A whole range of effective good practice follows from this belief which makes a significant difference to the outcomes achieved for vulnerable learners.

## **iii. Teaching and Learning**

One of the key lessons from research about closing achievement gaps is to build on high quality teaching for all learners, rather than focus on other one off activities and events outside school hours. Evidence from the Sutton Trust, the Education Endowment Foundation and WG report show that significant improvement can be made in improving outcomes for FSM learners by:

- Improving feedback between teachers and learners
- Paired teaching
- Small group teaching
- One to one tuition
- Independent learning strategies
- Peer mentoring
- Parental involvement

## **iv. Enrichment activities**

The Local Authority also recognises the importance of greater engagement by vulnerable learners in enrichment activities that help to develop confidence and resilience. These activities, (including sports and outward bound, performing arts, music lessons, after school clubs and trips) are taken for granted by many children, but more effort is needed to ensure pupils on free school meals participate in them and get the benefits. Sometimes this will cost money for individual children and should be supported by the Pupil Development Grant. The LA encourages schools to use grant funding to support some pupils to have these opportunities, when they would not otherwise do so.

## **6. Role of the Local Authority – operational activities**

The service areas within the education directorate undertake a range of ongoing roles and responsibilities that contributes to the attainment of FSM children and young people. This includes:

## **i. Adult Education**

The Adult Education Service courses support families of FSM pupils with everyday life e.g. reading/writing letters, using price comparison websites, filling in forms, managing the family budgets – all of these skills help to ensure they are able to fully function in society. The classes/ course also support family engagement. For example, employability skills assist progression to more sustainable employment, addressing underemployment.

The ESF projects in partnership with the Adult Education Service provide a wide range of vocational training courses in order for the families of FSM pupils to upskill and find employment.

## **ii. Advisory Service**

The Advisory teacher caseload is currently prioritised by schools through multi agency planning meetings and as highlighted through the Statutory process. FSM pupils may feature within this linked to:

- Outcomes of capacity building with staff such as:
  - Whole school training as identified by schools to enable school to better meet the needs of learners and raise standards and overcome barriers to learning
  - Individual teacher / teacher assistant training to support schools to provide for all learners
  - Developing the ALNCo role to coordinate and provide for a range of presenting individual needs
- Support for identified vulnerable learners through consultation, observations and assessment and to identify and recommend programmes of learning to reduce barriers to learning and raise standards
- Provision of individual programmes (Spld)

## **iii. ALN Statutory teams**

The Statutory Team is responsible for managing the Local Authority's responsibility and commitment to ensure that children and young people with additional learning needs have their needs met as detailed in the Special Educational Needs code of Practice for Wales (2002).

The requests for statutory assessments received by the Local Authority may feature FSM pupils. Nevertheless the fact that a pupil is in receipt of FSM does not impact the legal process of identifying if the learner has additional learning needs. Therefore the statutory team does not report on this indicator.

## **iv. Behaviour Support**

The Behaviour Support Service works with schools and a range of services both within and external to the local authority to support schools to meet the needs of pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural barriers to learning. Pupils who have free school meals are not targeted specifically however pupils with FSM will be amongst those whom the service supports.

The Behaviour Support Service works with schools at bi-annual planning meetings to identify the schools priorities both in terms of systemic support to develop approaches to supporting pupils well being and to identify work with individual pupils. The needs of vulnerable groups are prioritised in this process. The Behaviour Support Service also responds to schools needs where pupils' behaviour has become a concern or where the pupil is at risk of exclusion due to their challenging behaviour.

## **v. Early Years**

The Early Year's department covers a range of initiatives that directly support FSM children, including the following:

- Flying Start works in the most disadvantaged LSOA's with high proportion of FSM children offering enhanced health visiting, access to family support and parenting programmes, support for children to learn to talk and communicate as well as part-time childcare.
- Flying Start outreach for vulnerable care leavers / young parents offers family support throughout pregnancy and early years to reduce the need for the baby to enter the care system.
- The Early Years Pupil Development Grant provides funding to Early Years Education non-maintained providers allowing childcare settings to purchase resources and attend training.
- Assisted and Supported Places offers access to group childcare provision for children with emerging developmental delays and additional needs who are unable to fund the placement themselves.
- The SRB outreach team works with children of Nursery/Reception school age with severe speech and language delays offers targeted Speech Language and Communication.
- Families Learning Together provides essential skills support often targeted at the most disadvantaged communities where there is high FSM linking to employability programmes to support parental aspirations once they have made progress with essential skills
- School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) is a targeted programme in schools with high FSM percentages. The programme combines two healthy meals per day, nutrition sessions and physical activity for three weeks of the school holidays.
- The Childcare Offer funds childcare places for 3-4 year olds who are in part time Foundation Phase of eligible working parents thus removing childcare as a barrier for economically inactive parents.

#### **vi. Educational Welfare Service**

The EWS caseload is directed by persistent absentees. However, FSM pupils feature highly in caseloads and analysis of attendance data. Therefore, the following range of support is offered to families:

- Work with individual pupils and families to overcome barriers to attendance
- Refer to external agencies for support around mental health, financial difficulties, family dynamics, benefits
- Signposting to tenancy support, medical professionals, Youth Engagement to further support the family
- Provide information of free activities/groups in the area to improve wellbeing
- Direct to local food banks, charities – support with food items and uniforms
- Support schools in the tracking of FSM pupils in order for them to put interventions in place
- Provide advice around the legalities of school attendance and the possible financial implications
- Build bridges between families and schools where relationships have broken down.

#### **vii. Educational Psychology**

The Educational Psychology Service bases its allocation of visits to schools on a formula including the numbers of pupils on roll and the percentage of pupils who receive Free School Meals so those schools with higher numbers of pupils who are FSM receive a proportionally higher number of visits.

Educational Psychologists work with schools at bi-annual planning meetings to identify the schools priorities both in terms of systemic support and EP's work with individual pupils. The needs of vulnerable groups are prioritised in this process.

The EPS also delivers a range of workshops and training packages aimed at raising awareness of issues and helping schools to develop systems and interventions at both a whole school and individual level. Although not targeted at pupils with FSM they should benefit a wide range of pupils

who might be more vulnerable e.g. Developing Resilience, using Positive Psychology to support well being.

### **viii. EOTAS**

Work with EOTAS focuses on individual priorities. Young people are often known prior to becoming EOTAS and have accessed services from EPS and BSS. Pupils with FSM are amongst those supported.

### **ix. Finance**

The finance team provide support to schools in the distribution of a range of grant funding aimed to support FSM pupils. This includes the PDG Grant and PDG LAC Grant where finance officers liaise with schools to ensure that the grant is fully spent. In addition, the PDG EOTAS grant funding is distributed to each LA as agreed regionally. Funding in recent years has been predominantly directed to the PRU Learning Centre.

The finance team also support schools in raising awareness with families the terms and conditions of the PDG Access Grant.

### **x. Healthy Schools**

Healthy schools provide support to all schools, regardless of their locality. Any training offered is open to all, and all schools are encouraged to work towards the National Quality Award. We also have 2 EOTAS settings and the PRU fully engaged in the Healthy Schools scheme. Additionally Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre have achieved the NQA. We also signpost schools to particular initiatives/projects such as:

- Spectrum, who will deliver to all schools, but place emphasis on particular areas where issues may be more prevalent.
- D2S targets the areas with highest levels of deprivation
- Police Liaison delivers to all schools but they also deliver specific projects to targeted schools such as “Mini police”

The school nursing service deliver the immunisation programme to all Primary schools. They highlight the 10 lowest uptake schools and healthy schools work with these to promote the need for immunisations. FSM pupils have access to same health care.

All schools, EOTAS settings and youth centres have received red period dignity boxes with a variety of products suitable for everyone. These boxes are placed so that pupils can easily access them without embarrassment or stigma.

### **xi. Library Services**

Library Services are free of charge to all residents in the County Borough, regardless of their circumstances. This includes joining the Library, borrowing items, placing requests for specific titles or subjects of interest, etc. Under 16's do not pay overdue charges or fees for lost or damaged items of stock. A range of events and activities are available for free to all children, young people, and adults still in education or training. Examples include:

- Summer Reading Challenge participation
- Bookstart pack at child's 9 month health check
- Participation in coding clubs, lego events, storytimes, author/illustrator visits
- World Book Day events
- Harry Potter night promotions
- All ICT facilities and wireless computing provision
- Free printing of School or College assignments or information on career or job opportunities etc.

- Free participation in School Engagement initiatives including Digital i-Skills sessions, Reading for fun passes and 'genre fiction' collections at Secondary School level
- Library offers free study space for all and supports EOTAS tutors and pupils to learn in their communities and in a setting that suits them.
- Each Library offers access to hard copy and online information free of charge including specialist Parent collections at each of the Council's 18 locations.

## **xii. Music Service**

As part of the service level agreement, Caerphilly Music Service offers subsidised lessons for all schools. Currently, secondary schools are offered a free lesson for every lesson they buy. Primary schools are offered a free lesson for every two lessons they purchase. This aims to reduce the cost of music lessons to parents/carers with particular support for FSM pupils. In addition, the music service provides free instrumental loans for all pupils, free access to county ensembles and additional groups, free theory lessons. Performance opportunities at venues such as St David's Hall, Royal Albert Hall and the Motorpoint Arena are also free for all participants. In recent years, funding has been available for more able and talented FSM pupils to attend the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama.

## **xiii. Youth Services**

The Youth Service provides open access informal education to approximately 15,000 young people, a proportion of which will have FSM status. In selected cases, the FSM status of a (Youth) service user can be identified via the STRIVE vulnerability profiling system which provides the Youth Service with additional insight into the young person's needs: This information is then considered by the youth service before determining which project or team is best placed and most appropriate to take any intervention forward.

Many of the service's FSM young people benefit from the personal support and learning relationships that typify Youth Work-style interventions, as these are open ended (that is, not limited by any time frame) and designed to meet the needs of the young person in as an inclusive way as possible.

Specialist Youth Service projects, such as the (Families First) Targeted Youth and Family Engagement project, identify the most vulnerable families for support. These families typically include FSM learners.

## **xiv. Information Data Team (LA)**

The LA data team monitor and review the use of FSM as a poverty indicator, facilitating the flow of information relating to vulnerable groups. The data team manage and incorporate data from other sources (WG and EAS) into LA reports. The teams work with teams across the LEI to identify and track vulnerable groups.

## **7. The Role of parents/carers**

Parents are children's first and most influential educators, throughout the child's lifetime. There is substantial evidence to link the home learning environment, including parental attitudes and behaviours, with their child's outcomes. Key factors include a language rich environment, an emphasis on learning and parental engagement as well as how well a parent and child are attuned. Early Childhood Education and Care research has identified partnership with parents as key to quality provision and child outcomes. Where education engages parents as equal partners in their child's learning, there is greater success for all concerned. Collaborative partnerships are those built on mutual trust and respect, and an understanding that all involved can bring strengths to achieve the goals.

Parenting programmes and wider family support have a focus on raising parental aspirations and developing quality relationships. Creating links between parents, community and education provision supporting all in lifelong learning raises aspirations in a non-confrontational manner. This in turn

supports children to have more holistic development including improved emotional and cognitive development. There are many examples of good practice through Flying Start, to school family liaison workers, where best practice is embedded in establishing community relationships.

Role modelling positive expected social behaviours as adults in any contact situation is as equally important as explaining to children and young people how they should be behaving in any given context. Relationships take on a more important context when we overlay the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and how the incidents in our past may dictate our behaviour in future situations. When adults change the conversation opening from one of blame to one of understanding context, the discussion can be far more fruitful based on trust and respect, and achieve better outcomes in the longer term.

## **8. Role of other partners**

The Public Service Board (PSB) has strategic responsibility across the Public bodies to develop and implement the Wellbeing Assessment and Wellbeing Plan for Caerphilly borough. One of the objectives is Best Start in Life, which includes mitigating the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences, developing a cohesive early years integrated system antenatal to 7 years old, and Children First which is targeted multi agency community focussed work to create resilient communities to improve outcomes for children and young people.

A second wellbeing objective is multi agency community work targeting regeneration in Lansbury Park, which links strategically and operationally to the Children First work. The Coalition for Change Board sits under the PSB with membership at senior manager level and is the strategic driver for change to target the most disadvantaged communities and pilot different ways of working to create better outcomes. Children First links to this Board but has a more operational manager membership to drive operational delivery changes in frontline teams with children and young people at the heart of the process.

The strategic boards have a significant role to play in supporting change in statutory and discretionary services and enabling greater collaboration across many different agencies, including police, schools, health, voluntary sector and early intervention provision.

The early years integrated system pathfinder work stream involves partners at a regional level with senior managers from Caerphilly Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB), and Public Health Wales. Although at the start of this work, the initial mapping of the system has been completed and there is now work to be done at Heads of Service level in September to identify what the challenges in the current system are, and what the system should look like for children and families moving through the system. This will require trust and collaboration to make decisions on future funding and delivery to move to a more cohesive system for families and make a decisive difference to those in the most disadvantaged circumstances. It will aim to address some of the current challenges like postcode and complexity and inequity currently in the system caused by multiple funding streams and guidance or legislation, and will require long term strategic commitment.

There are many partners wrapped around current provision for FSM pupils including some of those already mentioned in specific grants administered through Education but partnership goes far beyond this, for example, Flying Start, Families First, Supporting People, regeneration teams, employability programmes, housing teams, Gwent police, ABUHB, Public Health Wales, and voluntary sector organisations like GAVO, Barnardo's, Action for Children, Pobl, Right from the Start, Llamau, Citizens Advice Bureau, Parent Network, and all the childcare settings, to name but a few. The partnership work is critical to ensuring services are targeted to the right children and young people, at the right time, in the right place and for the right amount of time to support the changes needed to enable better outcomes.

## 9. Accountability processes related to the performance of FSM pupils

### i. Schools Causing Concern Meetings

A Schools Causing Concern meeting can be requested by the Local Authority when a school is considered to be a 'school which causes concern' or is at risk of 'becoming a school which causes concern'. A School Causing Concern meeting will be arranged when a school;

- Is placed in a red or amber category;
- Has received a local authority warning notice;
- Is placed in an Estyn statutory category of requiring Significant Improvement or Special Measures;
- Demonstrates evidences that enhanced support and challenge is required linked to grounds 1-6 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 for Schools Causing Concern.

Meetings **may be** arranged when a school;

- Is placed in a yellow or green category but its capacity to improve is not secure and / or the pace of improvement is too slow.
- Is in an Estyn review category.
- Is identified as a risk in relation to a review or audit, which has been conducted by the LA or EAS. This may include for example; Finance, Health & Safety and Safeguarding Audits or Leadership and ALN Reviews.
- Demonstrates evidences that enhanced support and challenge is required linked to grounds 1-6 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

Purpose of meetings:

- To review and evaluate pace and progress in relation to identified School Development Plan priorities.
- To challenge the Headteacher and Governing Body on the rates of progress in their school.
- To recommend and monitor actions aimed at accelerating improvement.

To consider the extent to which the school has been successful in achieving required improvement. This will determine future actions by the LA and EAS.

Increasingly, schools causing concern meetings have been used to ascertain and evaluate the progress, attainment and attendance of FSM learners. In 2019-20, schools causing concern meetings will increase the level of scrutiny on the performance of all FSM pupils with particular focus on:

- Attainment of FSM at end of key stages;
- Progress of FSM through the year;
- Quality of teaching and learning (including interventions);
- Attendance and exclusions relating to FSM learners;
- Effective use of the Pupil Development Grant.

### ii. Local Authority Quality Assurance Meetings

Meetings take place on a monthly basis, where the LA has the opportunity to consider the impact of the work undertaken by the Education Achievement Service. LA QA sessions evaluates the progress of individual schools and identifies further work to be undertaken by the EAS on behalf of the Local Authority. These meetings, therefore, monitor the impact of the 'Shared Ambitions' document. As identified in the 'Schools Causing Concern' meetings, the focus on the performance of FSM pupils will increase from 2019-2020 and will include:

- Attainment of FSM at end of key stages;

- Progress of FSM through the year;
- Quality of teaching and learning (including interventions);
- Attendance and exclusions relating to FSM learners;
- Monitoring the impact of the Pupil Development Grant.

These meetings are also an opportunity to share LA based information to support the work of the EAS; e.g. attendance and exclusions relating to FSM learners.

### **iii. Service Improvement Plan**

As referenced in section 2, the 'Service Improvement Plan' identifies the targets and actions for improvement across all aspects of the education directorate. In 2019, the 'Service Improvement Plan' included additional focus on the attainment, achievement and experiences of pupils from vulnerable groups including FSM pupils. To identify the impact of the plan, staff undertake a termly monitoring and evaluation exercise that considers:

- the extent to which the actions have been completed;
- the impact of the work;
- further activities that need to take place to achieve the targets identified in the plan.

Education Management Meetings are a further opportunity to evaluate and challenge each other with regards to the work undertaken to achieve the targets in the plan.

### **iv. Pupil Development Grant Plan Review meetings**

The Local Authority and Educational Achievement Service undertake annual meetings with senior leaders in schools to consider the impact of Pupil Development Plans and reviews. Schools are provided with support and advice to ensure that the plans are likely to have high impact on learner outcomes. Where appropriate, schools are asked to resubmit plans in light of the feedback received.

### **v. Pupil Aspiration Board**

From September 2019, the Strategic Lead for School Improvement will chair half termly meetings to implement the FSM strategy. Membership of the Board will consist of:

- Strategic Lead for School Improvement (Chair)
- X1 Early Years Lead
- X2 Secondary Headteachers
- X3 Primary Headteachers
- X1 Lead EWO
- X1 Healthy Schools practitioner
- X1 Educational Psychologist
- X1 Advisory Teacher
- X1 EAS Representative

The purpose of the Board will be to implement a culture of change within all schools based on the available research, encompassing the best practice in teaching and learning. The discussion and actions from the Board will be shared with key stakeholders throughout the year. It is the expectation that the outcomes of the Board will impact on all schools across Caerphilly.

### **vi. Education Scrutiny meetings**

The Education Scrutiny committee has a statutory role to ensure that the council carries out its responsibilities properly and, where necessary, are accountable for their actions.

Scrutiny committees have four main roles:

- Holding the education officers as decision-makers to account;

- Undertaking reviews of council services and policies;
- Undertaking reviews to develop council services and policies;
- Considering any other matter that affect the county borough.

Within this process, the impact of the work to improve the attainment, progress and experiences of FSM pupils permeates across a number of reports. It is the intention that the revised FSM Strategy will be presented to scrutiny in autumn 2019.

## vii. Estyn

As part of their remit, Estyn will scrutinise the standards and provision for FSM pupils and other vulnerable learners. Supplementary guidance by Estyn (2017) on reducing the impact of poverty identifies the following strategies to improve outcomes for pupils:

- Adopt a whole-school strategic approach to tackling disadvantage
- Make intelligent use of data tracking systems to identify learners' needs
- Target interventions, monitor impact and evaluate effectiveness
- Adopt strategies that involve parents and carers in learners' education
- Engage communities in the life of the school and the school in the life of the community
- Improve attendance
- Recognise the relationship between wellbeing and standards and adapt practice to reflect this
- Work in partnership with each other and with other organisations
- Employ interventions that are evidentially the most effective

Inspectors will also usually report on the extent to which the school makes good use of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG). The judgement on how well the school uses this funding should align to standards and progress of pupils. Inspectors should also evaluate the use of other grants such as the Early Years Pupil Development Grant and the Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children (Estyn, 2017).

## 10. How will we know the strategy is successful?

The measures that will indicate success are identified in the Service Improvement Plan 2019:

### i. Attainment – Key Stage 4

<b>KS4 Standards</b>	<b>Target</b>
KS4 – Capped 9 ( 2018 Welsh Government average)	350.1
Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge L2 (similar LAs)	80%
Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge L2 (Welsh average)	76%
Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge L2 +1 (similar LAs)	50%
Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge L2 +1 (Welsh average)	54%

### ii. Attendance

	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
Primary (e-FSM)	92.40%	92.60%	92.80%
Secondary (e-FSM)	90.00%	90.20%	90.40%

iii. Early Years

	<b>Baseline data 2018</b>	<b>Target</b>
Number of children registered for Flying Start Programme	2436 at Dec 2018	2483
% Attendance Flying Start Childcare	72% Autumn 2018	85%
Number of parents completing Flying Start parenting programmes	61% Autumn 2018	75%
Number of Flying Start parents enrolled in legacy / employment programme	Not collected prior to Spring 2019	N/A
Number of Children attending SHEP project during school Holiday	Summer 2018 70	More than 80
Number of applications for Child Care Offer	389 Autumn 2018	N/A
Number of Childcare Offer Placements	668 at December 2018	N/A
Savings to parents through Childcare Offer placements	£105,075 at March 2018	N/A
Number of Families First funded Assisted and Supported Placements	201 for 2018	91

iv. Adult Education

	<b>Target</b>
Meet or exceed employability targets (as given for the BIW and Inspire programme)	BIW: Engagement- 548 Employment- 102 Qualifications- 304 Voluntary placements- 128 Inspire: Engagement- 293 Qualifications- Education/training- 146 Employment- 55