

PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING

A SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL GUIDE TO
GETTING STARTED

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CONTENTS

PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING	3
1 IDENTIFYING YOUR GAP	4
2 CONSIDER WHAT BARRIERS TO LEARNING EXIST IN YOUR COMMUNITY	6
3 TAKING STOCK: WHAT'S WORKING ALREADY AND HOW DO YOU KNOW?	8
4 CLOSING THE GAP - RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL?	10
PEF STARTER READING LIST	15

PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING

What is PEF?

Pupil Equity Funding is additional funding allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap. Pupil Equity Funding has been allocated to schools on the basis of the estimated number of children and young people in P1-S3 registered for free school meals under the national eligibility criteria.

What can it be used for?

Funding must provide targeted support for children and young people affected by poverty to achieve their full potential. Headteachers can use their professional judgement to include additional children who may benefit from the targeted interventions.¹ The funding should be focused on activities and interventions that will lead to improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Family learning opportunities can also be considered as potential interventions, as can interventions that impact on transitions between school stages.

Accountability and Reporting

An Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and SBC Attainment Officers will support Headteachers to plan, deliver and evaluate appropriate evidence-based interventions¹. They have a key role in building the capacity of leaders and practitioners by supporting effective self-evaluation, underpinned by robust evidence of what is working well and what needs further improvement. They will also co-ordinate appropriate support for schools at a local and national level. The "Pupil Equity Funding – National Operational Guidance" document is available at <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00516300.pdf> This is intended to help schools plan how they will most effectively invest their Pupil Equity Funding allocation to improve the educational outcomes of children affected by poverty. Guidance on School Improvement Planning, including Standards and Quality reporting, has been provided through the National Improvement **Framework**

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<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/NIFschoolimprovementguidance201718.pdf>

This document includes the advice that the school improvement plan should include "clear planning for how the Pupil Equity Funding (if relevant) will be used to provide targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to close the poverty related attainment gap and measures of success which include performance data, quality indicators and stakeholders' views." It also states "the local authority should use the information contained in each school's annual report to collate and share self-evaluation evidence in relation to the NIF with the Scottish Government."

¹ In addition, Head teachers should consider additional steps that might be required to close the educational attainment gap for pupils affected by poverty who may also experience disadvantage for other reasons. For example, disadvantage related to; a protected characteristic (disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation); a need for which they require additional support; being looked after; having caring responsibilities. (Pupil Equity Funding – National Operational Guidance – 2017) **"More successful"**,

1 Identifying your Gap

Agree and define what the gap looks like in your school context.

Using data at school/faculty level:

- CfE Levels or NQ data in literacy and numeracy by SIMD
- How CfE Levels compare with standardised assessment data – any surprises?
- Between the most and least disadvantaged – SIMD 1 + 2, SIMD 9 + 10
- Use virtual comparator school, local, national statistics where appropriate
- Attendance, exclusion, participation rates
- Achievement awards within school and community
- Leaver destinations where appropriate
- Working knowledge of CfE benchmarks to consider to what extent children are reaching important milestones.
- Consider qualitative data – key adult time, learner conversations, planning meetings.

At classroom level:

- Establish a learner's starting point – this may involve carrying out a baseline assessment
- Expect progress for all and excellent progress for many
- All SIMD bands proportionately represented in the "excellent" – no pattern of lower attainment for children in lower SIMD
- Engage all class teachers in closing the gap – what can be done within lessons?

[Graeme Logan, Director, Education Scotland, February 2017]



Think about:

- Is every teacher in every class aware of SIMD/FME/LAC data (along with other relevant information) on their learners?

- Are sufficiently ambitious targets set for your identified learners?

- How do you ensure there is early enough identification of these learners? How do you use data to support this judgement?

- Do you have specific and measurable targets for your identified learners? How much progress, by when?

- How will interventions be monitored and evaluated?

- In what ways are the targeted learners who are under-performing being given additional support? How are you measuring the impact of that additional support?

- How are parents consulted on and involved in targeted support?

2 Consider what barriers to learning exist in your Community

• Quality of learning and teaching

It is important to ensure that day-to-day teaching meets the needs of each learner rather than relying on interventions to compensate for less than good teaching.

(Ofsted, "Closing the Gap in Hertfordshire", 2013)

There is a strong link between teachers' professional skills and competences and the quality of children's learning experiences. Ensuring the highest professional standards for all teachers in Scotland will help to ensure the highest standards and expectations for all children. We want all new teachers to develop as enquiring professionals who are experts in teaching literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, including early childhood development where appropriate. This is critical to ensure the strongest possible progression in learning for all children.

(From "Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education – Delivery Plan", 2016)

• Disengaged families

Research shows that giving parents the skills they need to help their children learn produces the best outcomes. Parents engaging in enjoyable conversations and enjoyable books with their children will support this. Sustained, group-based, persistent home-school relationships is another key factor in encouraging parental engagement. Disadvantaged families do not lack high aspiration for their children. (Ellis, S. and Sosu, E. 2015)

Educational interventions involving the whole family make a significant difference not only to the aspirations and attainment of children, but also to the skills, confidence and ambition of their parents. Family learning has long-term benefits as it affects behaviours and attitudes to learning across the whole family (van Steensel et al, 2011).

• Teachers lacking aspiration

Less successful approaches have included teachers assuming that pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium will have learning difficulties and therefore, lowering expectations of performance. A no excuses approach is needed. (Ofsted, "Closing the Gap in Hertfordshire", 2013) "A relentless focus on closing the attainment gap" (From "Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education – Delivery Plan", 2016)

• Early development

For too many children, especially those living in the most deprived areas, educational failure starts early. Gaps in achievement between the poorest children and their better-off counterparts are clearly established by the age of five. There are strong associations between a child's social background and their readiness for school as measured by their scores on entry into Year 1. Too many children, especially those that are poor, lack a firm grounding in the key skills of communication, language, literacy and mathematics. (Ofsted, "Are you ready? Good practice in school readiness", April 2014)

• Language skills

It is interesting to note the number of words spoken to children by adults by the age of 36 months in professional families (35 million), in other working-class families (20 million) and in families on welfare (10 million). (William, D. 2016)

Evidence also shows that at age five, compared with children whose parents have no qualifications, children with a degree educated parent are around 18 months ahead on vocabulary. Children who display better communication skills at an early age are more likely to see their cognitive skills improve during the pre-school period (between ages three and five). This relationship is stronger for children whose parents have no or low educational qualifications. Children from less educated backgrounds whose relative vocabulary ability improves are typically those who are already demonstrating better communication skills at an earlier age. This reinforces the need to support communication skills and language development before the age of three. (Save the Children, "Read On, Get On" report, 2014)

• Home life

A child's early home environment has a profound effect on his well-being. Beginning in infancy, a problematic home environment can disrupt the brain's stress response system, reduce the quality of caregiving a child receives, and interfere with healthy development. (Urban Child Institute, 2012) Children from less advantaged backgrounds are more likely to feel a lack of control over and less involvement in their learning, and so have a greater tendency to become reluctant recipients of the taught curriculum. This relates both to children's attitudes towards learning and to their relationships with adults. (Joseph Rowntree Foundation report "Experiences of Poverty and Educational Disadvantage", 2007)

• Stress, anxiety, lack of confidence

Emotions can support or impede pupils' learning, their academic engagement, work ethic, commitment, and ultimate school success. A number of specific social and emotional competencies have positive effects on academic achievement: pupils who are confident about their learning and who have a 'growth mindset' (they believe their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work) persist when faced with challenges; pupils who can set goals, manage stress and organise their school work achieve higher grades; pupils who use problem-solving skills to overcome obstacles do better academically. Social and emotional competencies have been found to be a more significant determinant of academic attainment than IQ. (Public Health England, "The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment" 2014)

Other barriers to learning may exist in your specific, unique community. Consider what they might be and how you can disrupt their influence.

3 Taking Stock: What's working already and how do you know?

Audit

- Which groups of learners have made expected or better progress?
- Which specific strategies/interventions have made a measurable difference in terms of closing the attainment gap? Are you able to pinpoint the specific aspects that made the difference?
- Evaluate any interventions and support you have put in place. Have they proved value for money in terms of the progress learners have made compared to the time, resources and staffing you have allocated to them?
- Should you continue with these or are there alternative interventions or more fundamental changes which would offer better value and result in greater impact?

Planning

- What do you want attainment and achievement to look like in your school/centre by 2020? How will you agree and share this vision with the whole school community?
- What are your non-negotiable outcomes for all?
- Have you identified the group of learners who are disadvantaged?
- Is your aim specific and measurable? How much, by when?
- How will your planned interventions disrupt the cycle of deprivation being linked to lower attainment and achievement?
- Do you have clarity about evidence-based targeted interventions you have chosen and the expected impact on your gap?
- Have you agreed and shared clear timescales for each intervention?

Implementation

- Have you identified who is leading on the Pupil Equity Funding initiative(s) in your school? Does each intervention have a lead practitioner with clear responsibilities in terms of managing the intervention?
- Are you confident that your interventions are targeting the correct learners?
- Have you got "buy-in" from all key stakeholders in your learning community?
- Have you considered how to target without stigmatisation?
- No one package or strategy will close your gap in isolation. High quality learning and teaching will benefit all learners in your learning community.
- Have you invested in any CLPL for staff to ensure the best possible learning experiences **are being** delivered in your school/centre?
- Would wider changes in the way we work enhance additional support in meeting the needs of learners and closing the gap?

Monitoring

- Have you considered how best to develop data literacy in all staff? The effective use of data is key to everyone knowing where your targeted young people are in terms of their progression and may be a CLPL need in your school/centre.
- Systematic data collection should happen before, during and at the end of implementation. Do you require support with this? Could your assigned Attainment Officer be a source of such support?
- What mechanisms do you plan to use to collect this data and how reliable will the data be?
- Have you planned how to continue to track the targeted cohort post-implementation to ensure gains are sustained?
- Be prepared to adapt or stop interventions if they are not working within appropriate timescales.

Evaluation

- How will you know you have closed the gap? Education Scotland will report on the link between poverty and attainment in your school when you are inspected. How will you demonstrate the impact?
- The most effective schools will have high levels of attainment and there will be no observable pattern between this attainment and levels of deprivation (eg pupils living in SIMD levels 1 and 2 or in receipt of free school meals, will have attainment levels on a par with those living in SIMD levels 9 and 10).
- Effective schools will analyse performance to assess the impact of other factors that disadvantage learners related to; for example looked after children, a protected characteristic (disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation) or other additional support needs.
- Softer indicators may also be permissible at certain time points. For example children from poorer areas show the same aspiration to attend university as pupils in better off areas.
- Focussing on Looked After Children's literacy and numeracy is also likely to close the gap.
- You can measure the progress of various groups of children and collect evidence of improvements. Give yourself the best chance of demonstrating such evidence by taking baseline measures pre-intervention.



4 Closing the Gap – Responsibility of all

Advice from Education Scotland is to identify a few targeted interventions which focus specifically on closing your gap. Creativity and new approaches across the four contexts of learning may work well as long as they are based on evidence. So what can make the difference?

Organisers

- Learning and Teaching
- Leadership
- Families and Communities

Interventions

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Health and Wellbeing

Aim for a range of activities both within and beyond the classroom.
Work together with partners.

**Think transformational – not transactional.
Structural ‘stuff’/hardware has the least effect.**

Organisers

Leadership

Prioritise closing the gap, have a clear, collaborative whole school focus on approaches/interventions to be used and pursue these consistently and relentlessly. Provide significant, high quality professional development tailored to the needs of the staff, school and chosen interventions. Incorporate systematic monitoring of impact and continued support for teachers.

Providing reliable data and developing data literate staff who have the opportunity to have professional conversations about the interventions, coupled with simple but effective monitoring and tracking systems, will help to ensure any impact or otherwise can be identified and acted on in a timely manner.



Poverty proofing the school can help to mitigate against some of the negative impact we know poverty has on stigma and engagement with school. School leaders can make positive choices around minimising costs and pressures on family budgets, ensuring equal opportunities regardless of income and reducing poverty related stigma. A useful resource is “1 in 5 – Raising Awareness of Child Poverty”, which can be found on the National Improvement Hub. School to school networking – work together, share expertise and have a clear focus on what is working and how nuances may make the difference. Closing the gap is the responsibility of all.

Learning and teaching

Very high quality learning and teaching closes the gap. Average learning and teaching doesn't. (Dylan William, 2016)

Consistently high standards across the school will be required to make the difference. Robust evaluation systems coupled with high quality, targeted professional learning should be used to improve the quality of learning and teaching.

Research tells us the following approaches can work:

- Metacognitive and self-regulation strategies
- Assessment and improvement feedback
- Structured group work/cooperative learning
- Peer and one to one tutoring
- Peer evaluation
- Effective questioning
- After school/outside school activities, linked specifically, for example literacy, numeracy, study skills
- Mentoring where objectives are agreed and clear, they are well trained and carefully matched to individual learners
- Differentiation by task, support and outcome

Consider allocating the best teachers to the most disadvantaged learners and what impact this may have.

Families and communities

Support families to realise their ambitions for their children.

Support parents to develop the skills they need to help their children learn.

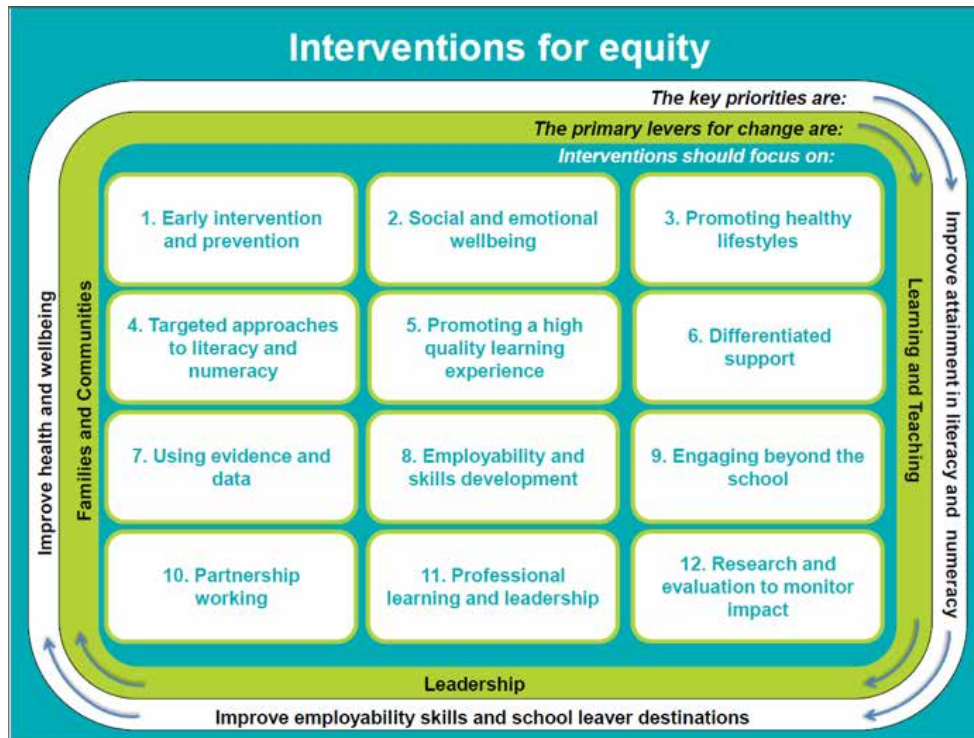
Develop sustained, group based, home school relationships.

Provide professionally led positive parenting support.

Work with partners who can reach parents and who can offer specialist support.

Listen to and empower families and the community – “do with, not to”.

Interventions



Resources such as the National Improvement Hub and the Scottish Learning and Teaching Toolkit can provide information on evidenced based interventions which can help to close the gap.

A few key messages around what works in relation to each of the priority areas are:

Health and wellbeing

Pupil wellbeing is linked to attainment and a range of factors such as social and emotional learning, an assets based approach and supportive and inclusive school communities contribute to this. The adverse impact of poverty on health and wellbeing is well documented. This is evident in both physical and mental wellbeing and the risk of illness, low self esteem, stress, anxiety

<https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/psychological-perspectives-poverty>

Social and emotional competencies are key to enabling young people to achieve their academic potential and are most effective when implemented at whole school level.



Nurture groups can impact positively on social, emotional and behavioural competencies, if implemented well. Literature on resilience and emotional wellbeing identifies connectedness and belonging, feeling safe, valued and liked are key features in relation to positive communities and long term positive outcomes. The role of key adults has been identified as crucial. All adults should be ready to listen to and respond to individual pupils non judgementally and to notice and speak to them when they are concerned. Restorative and solution focussed approaches should be implemented to protect and foster positive relationships across the school and wider community.

Positive relationships impact on attainment. The climate of the classroom and the school community are very influential in supporting learning. Where learners feel there is a climate of trust, they are more likely to have confidence to share what they don't know and so get feedback on what they need to do to improve their learning (Hattie).

The level on engagement a pupil feels with their school is strongly associated with attainment (SCCYP), meaningful learner voice is key to developing this sense of engagement.

Aerobic physical activity can impact positively on academic performance.

Inadequate nutrition has a negative effect on attainment.

Literacy

Early intervention in early years focussing on language development and early reading.

Reading engagement can impact positively on vocabulary and achievement in other curricular areas.

Strengthening a learner's ability to decode using a range of cues supports learning to read.

Promotion of comprehension – of key messages, their implications, links with personal experiences and the wider world – will support a learner's literacy.

Phonics-based approaches to learning to read have been shown to be successful.

Numeracy

There is some evidence that digital revision and support packages can improve attainment in numeracy (eg Sumdog, Numicon).

There is some evidence to suggest that mastery-based approaches can provide particular improvements in mathematics.

It has been suggested by PISA that cognitive activation strategies can enhance problem solving ability in mathematics.

There is evidence (again from PISA) to suggest that teacher-directed instruction is more beneficial than student-directed approaches in mathematics.

Think about:

Don't be tempted by ... Taking on too many things at once.

HGIOS? 4 – 1.5 Management of Resources to Promote Equity

The quality indicator 1.5 within “How good is our school? 4” states that the promotion of equity is a shared responsibility held by all staff, partners and stakeholders. It also promotes the view that the school's management of resources should result in building a more sustainable and equitable future for all. This quality indicator links directly with the use and management of Pupil Equity Funding and therefore can be used to support self-evaluation and planning.

Features of highly-effective practice (HGIOS? 4 page 29) include:

- Staff have a shared understanding of what impacts on child poverty and make effective use of current available data on levels of child poverty and apply this to ensure equity.
- The school can evidence that decisions about expenditure have resulted in increased attainment and achievement.
- The impact of new resources are carefully monitored and evaluated to ensure a positive impact on learning. Evidence is used to support future resourcing.

Challenge questions include:

- How effective are our systems for managing shared budgets to ensure a clear focus on promoting equity (eg cluster or Parent Council budgets)?
- To what extent is financial expenditure focused on improving the quality of learning and teaching?
- How effectively do we use our resources to meet the learning needs of all and ensure equity?

PEF Starter

Reading List

National Guidance

- Pupil Equity Funding – National Operational Guidance
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00513664.pdf>
- Scottish Learning and Teaching Toolkit
<https://scot.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>
- National Improvement Hub – Interventions for Equity
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/Interventions-for-Equity.aspx>

Leadership

- Scottish College for Educational Leadership
<http://www.scelscotland.org.uk/>
- General Teaching Council for Scotland
<http://www.gtcs.org.uk/>

Learning and Teaching

- University of Strathclyde International Public Policy Institute/ Joseph Rowntree Foundation – Sue Ellis/Edward Sosu – “Closing poverty-related attainment gaps in Scotland’s schools: what works?”
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/education-attainment-scotland-full.pdf>
- The Sutton Trust/CEM/ Durham University – Robert Coe/Cesare Aloisi/Steve Higgins/ Lee Elliot Major – “What makes great teaching?”
<http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-makes-great-teaching-FINAL-4.11.14.pdf>

Families and Communities

- Education Scotland Review of Family Learning
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Documents/Family-Learning-Report-full-document.pdf>
- Engaging with Families
<http://engagingwithfamilies.co.uk/>
- The “1 in 5 – Raising Awareness of Child Poverty” Project, City of Edinburgh Council
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/pages/sacfi10b-child-poverty.aspx>



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