



BETTER ODDS AT SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

A Pupil Premium to help close the educational attainment gap

It is unacceptable that at every stage of schooling the UK's poorest children do worse and make less progress than their better-off classmates. The stark educational achievement gaps reinforce and perpetuate existing patterns of poverty. To break cycles of deprivation, children from the poorest homes must be given high-quality and sustained additional support to ensure they can overcome disadvantage and realise their potential.

What we're calling for

Save the Children:

- wants to see additional school spending on the poorest children
- wants schools to be accountable for the impact they make with the Pupil Premium
- welcomes plans for an Early Years Premium set at a higher level.



An unacceptable attainment gap

Figures from 2009 demonstrate the disparities between the achievements of children from the poorest families and their better-off peers:¹

- Inequalities in social, emotional and cognitive capacities are evident from a very early age. At the Early Years Foundation Stage, 34.5% of children eligible for free school meals (FSM) showed a good level of development compared to 55% of their peers.
- At age 11, 53.3% of FSM pupils scored expected levels in English and Maths compared to 75.5% of their classmates.
- At GCSE, 26.6% of the poorest children passed five GCSEs at grade C and above, compared to 54.2% of better-off children.
- In the last year for which figures are available, just 45 pupils out of a total of 81,000 FSM-eligible pupils won places at Oxbridge. Only 1% of the poorest pupils won places at the 20 elite Russell-group universities.

Pledges, proposals and resources

- The coalition government has pledged to fund a significant additional premium for disadvantaged pupils from outside the schools budget. The aims are broadly to: help close the educational achievement gap; incentivise schools to admit the poorest pupils; and ensure the school funding system is responsive to year-on-year changes in deprivation numbers.
- The Pupil Premium largely has its origins in proposals for various positively discriminating school vouchers proposals (Jencks, 1970² and Le Grand, 1989³).
- In 2009, Save the Children published *A Child's Portion* by Tom Sefton from the London School of Economics. This research explored deprivation weighting across children's services including

schools and early-years settings. The report called for greater emphasis on how schools allocate deprivation funding and mechanisms to ensure all intended resources reach the appropriate schools.⁴

- Total school spending in England amounted to £47.5 billion in 2008/09. Around 12% of this is taken up with capital expenditure and the remaining 88% with day-to-day expenditure. Average spending per pupil, excluding capital spending, is expected to reach £5,580 by 2010/11.⁵
- An announcement regarding the level of Pupil Premium for each local authority will be made in November or early December 2010, following the October Comprehensive Spending Review statement.

What needs to happen now

We want to see additional school spending on the poorest children

- To realise their potential the poorest children need higher school funding. The government should aim to ensure total per-pupil funding for children living in poverty equals per-pupil spend in the independent sector (average annual fees of £12,270 in 2009/10).
- The government must introduce a substantial Pupil Premium to supplement existing funding allocations. This should be worth at least £3,000 per year for each disadvantaged child (on average across local authorities) and must be additional to the implicit deprivation weighting already factored into school funding.
- The Pupil Premium must be delivered separately from base per-pupil funding (either straight to schools or passed on in full by local authorities). It must be absolutely clear to schools that this money is earmarked for raising the attainment of the poorest pupils.

Schools must be accountable for the impact they make with the Pupil Premium

- The government must publish annual school-level data on the progress made by the poorest pupils. Ofsted must assess schools on the allocation, monitoring and impact of the Pupil Premium.
- A comprehensive guide on the best proven ways of raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils must be available for all schools to help with internal planning.

We would welcome plans for an Early Years Premium set at a higher level

- The government should publish a timetable for the introduction of a more generous Early Years Premium (given the higher return on investment expected from early intervention spending).

What might a Pupil Premium fund?

Decisions on allocating the Pupil Premium should be made by headteachers and teachers. However, the extra funds could go towards a range of support for the poorest pupils:

- More one-to-one support or catch-up tuition
- Targeted extra-curricular activities or after-school/holiday study programmes
- Learning Mentors
- Ways of closely tracking pupil progress
- Extra teachers

A Pupil Premium as one part of the solution

At Save the Children we see more resources for the poorest pupils through the introduction of an explicit Pupil Premium as one part of the solution to closing the educational achievement gap. We are campaigning for a range of additional policy changes to help ensure each child can fulfil their potential:

- Parents deserve access to high-quality and voluntary parenting programmes with a proven impact on their children's educational outcomes. We are calling for a continuum of voluntary programmes (all with a robust evidence-base) in severely deprived areas – spanning antenatal care, mother and baby, pre-schoolers and provision for older primary school pupils. This support should be supplemented, in the poorest areas, with high-quality pre-school education for two and three year olds; Nurse Family Partnerships and Family Intervention Projects for those who need extra support; and comprehensive children's centre services.
- We are calling for wider school-accountability reform with greater emphasis on pupil progress, or value-added data and clear accountability for the progress made by the very poorest pupils.
- We believe every child must have access to high-quality extended and out-of-school activities. Funding must allow schools to deliver the best possible offer for the poorest pupils.
- Schools admissions reform must prevent and tackle social segregation in schools. Indices of selectivity, mixed-ability banding and a school admissions code that allows headteachers to guarantee a minimum number of places for poor children would be steps in the right direction.
- We want to see the best teachers in schools with the most challenging intakes. Teach First, teacher pay and the Advanced Skills Teacher programmes could all have a part to play. Moreover we need an awareness of poverty to be a key component of teacher training and continuing professional development.
- We want child poverty eradicated by 2020.



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- ¹ Statistical releases from the Department for Education, 1999/2010, www.dfes.gov.uk
- ² Jencks (1970), *Education Vouchers: A report on financing education by payments to parents*, Cambridge, Massachusetts Center for the Study of Public Policy
- ³ Le Grand, J, (1989), *Vouchers Reclaimed*, Samizdat
- ⁴ Sefton, T, (2009), London School of Economics, *A Child's Portion: An analysis of public expenditure on children in the UK*, Save the Children
- ⁵ Chowdry, Greaves, Sibieta (2010), *The Pupil Premium: Assessing the options*, Institute for Fiscal Studies
- ⁶ Independent Schools Council website, www.isc.co.uk

Save the Children fights for vulnerable children in the UK and around the world who suffer from poverty, disease, injustice and violence. We work with them to find lifelong answers to the problems they face.

We work to ensure that the rights of children in the UK and around the world are protected, promoted and respected in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other international human rights instruments, with a particular focus on poverty and educational attainment.

In the UK we work directly with children and families experiencing poverty and provide expertise, research and policy support to key partners including local authorities and national government. We are members of the End Child Poverty coalition and take a lead role in the campaign to end child poverty.

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