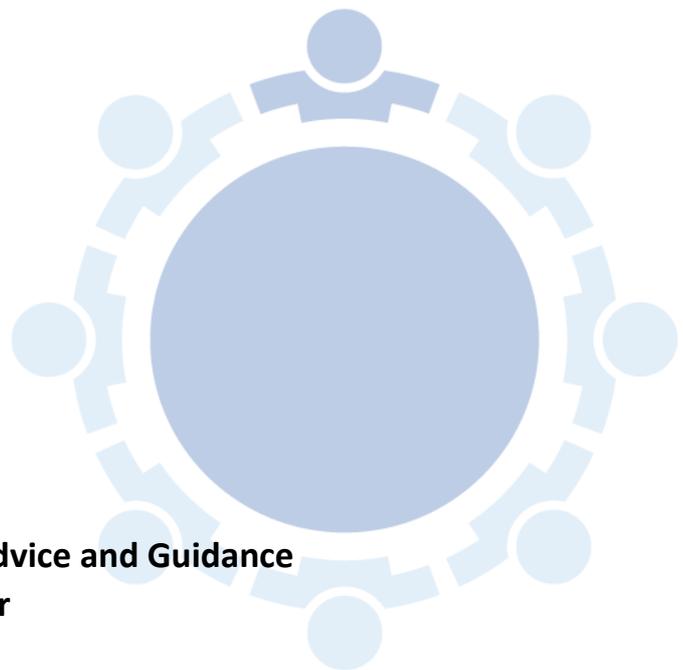


Pupil Premium: A guide for governing boards



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National Governance Association

The National Governance Association (NGA) is the membership organisation for governors, trustees and clerks of state schools in England.

We are an independent, not-for-profit charity that aims to improve the educational standards and wellbeing of young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. We are expert leaders in school governance, providing information, advice and guidance, professional development and e-learning.

We represent the views of governors, trustees and clerks at a national level and work closely with, and lobby, UK government and educational bodies.

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Introduction

The pupil premium is additional funding given to schools to narrow attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. It is paid for all pupils who claim free school meals, or who have claimed free meals in the last six years. The pupil premium plus is paid for every pupil who has left local authority care through adoption, a special guardianship order or child arrangements order. The service premium is paid for every pupil with a parent serving in the forces or who is retired on a Ministry of Defence pension.

Pupil premium rates announced for 2020/21

Primary pupils - £1,345

Secondary pupils - £955

Pupil premium plus - £2,345, per-pupil

Service premium - £310, per pupil

Governing boards are responsible for ensuring that pupil premium funding is spent effectively and in a way that improves the attainment of eligible pupils.

This guide explains how school leaders and governing boards:

- determine the most effective ways their school can use the pupil premium;
- agree, implement and monitor pupil premium spending, evaluating its impact;
- demonstrate accountability through the transparent reporting of pupil premium-related decisions.

We recommend that this guide is read alongside the [pupil premium information](#) and guidance for school leaders published by the Department for Education (DfE)

Further reading

Recommended further reading is referred to throughout this guide and is listed in the appendix.

Further support

[NGA's Learning Link](#) provides access to a catalogue of high-quality interactive online training including a module on how governing boards fulfil their responsibilities relating to the pupil premium.



Section 1: The governing board's role

It's up to school leaders to decide how to spend the pupil premium. This is because school leaders are best-placed to assess their pupils' needs and use funding to improve attainment.

The governing board is responsible for ensuring that the decisions school leaders make about how the pupil premium is spent are **targeted at the right pupils** (i.e. the pupils who receive the funding and pupils who don't but will benefit from the support/intervention that the funding is spent on) **and has an impact on their attainment and progress**. They fulfil this responsibility by:

1. Looking into the barriers to educational achievement their pupils face and making use of information, data and research to support and challenge the school's approach to overcoming them.
2. Contributing towards and approving the school's strategy for spending the pupil premium (based on 1. above).

Monitoring the implementation of the school's strategy for spending the pupil premium, thus ensuring that the funding is being used in identifiable ways and assessing its impact on the attainment and progress of the pupils who receive it. This may result in adjustments to the strategy and spending decisions over time.



Section 2: Deciding how the pupil premium is spent

School leaders will take into account a number of factors when deciding how their school's pupil premium should be spent. The context of the school aligned with knowledge and experience of what works play a significant part in the decision making process.

Therefore any plan to spend the money in areas such as improving teaching, extended support and tailored interventions is likely to be a result of careful analysis. So when the plan is put to the governing board, the governing board should ask school leaders to explain the following:

The whole school approach that informs pupil premium spending decisions

It's important that all staff and the governing board are aware of who the pupil premium eligible pupils (and the pupils most likely to benefit from the funding) are, how they benefit from the funding and how underachievement is targeted throughout the school, not just at the lower attaining pupils.

The data and information used to inform pupil premium spending decisions

School leaders should present internal information and data to the governing board in such a way that makes clear:

- strengths and weaknesses across the school;
- variations in the progress and attainment between pupil premium eligible and other pupils;
- trends, patterns and potential barriers to learning, and
- strategies that target underachievement throughout the school.

From this the governing board should know what is consistently preventing pupils at their school from achieving their full potential (e.g. language and communication, behaviour, punctuality issues etc.), which pupils are effected and therefore where pupil premium spending needs to be targeted.

Use the following external data to verify what has been provided by school leaders

- Analyse School Performance (ASP)
- The Fischer Family Trust [FFT dashboard](#). For information on how to use the dashboard see our [Knowing your School briefings](#).
- The [Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\) Families of Schools Database](#), which compares a school with others that have similar pupil characteristics and/or schools with similar contexts.



Use the following to help identify the barriers to learning at your school.

- Information and data relating to behaviour, incidents, exclusions etc.
- Information relating to attendance, persistent absence, punctuality etc.
- Information and data relating to language and communication
- Analysis of home circumstances (e.g. the extent to which there is less support at home)

The research used to inform pupil premium spending decisions

School leaders should be able to point the governing board to available research that supports their decisions on how the school's pupil premium funding should be spent and demonstrates that the spending is on areas that are proven to work.

We recommend that the following are referred to as a starting point:

- research published in 2015 by [National Foundation for Educational Research](#) (NFER) and commissioned by the DfE into how schools are raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, and
- the [Education Endowment Foundation's \(EEF\): pupil premium guide](#) (2019) [and teaching and learning toolkit](#) include strategies, case studies and research on effective use of the pupil premium.

The focus on a small number of key initiatives

The EEF pupil premium guide advocates using a tiered approach to determining how the pupil premium is spent and balancing the following:

- spending on improving teaching (e.g. investing in teacher CPD) in such a way that ensures an effective teacher is in front of every class, and that every teacher is supported to keep improving;
- spending on targeted academic support (e.g. structured one-to-one or small group intervention) on those who are not making good progress across the spectrum of achievement, and
- spending on initiatives designed to address significant non-academic barriers to success that are relevant to the school and its specific context (e.g. attendance, behaviour and social and emotional support).

The areas described above lend themselves to overlapping initiatives and provide school leaders with a coherent structure for their pupil premium strategy statement.



Section 3: The pupil premium strategy statement

All Local authority-maintained schools and most academies (check your funding agreement) are required to publish a pupil premium strategy statement on their websites (see section 5). The purpose of the pupil premium strategy statement is essentially to explain the decisions made by school leaders and governing boards regarding how the pupil premium is to be spent and the intended impact of these decisions. **Therefore the strategy statement also serves effectively as an action plan that governing boards can monitor.**

The DfE recommends that schools adopt a longer term approach to planning how their pupil premium funding is spent by publishing a pupil premium strategy statement that covers a three year period.

There is no prescribed format for the pupil premium strategy statement; it could either be a standalone document, or included as a section of the school improvement/development plan, thus emphasising that it can't be separated from school's overall strategy and improvement objectives. Whilst the leadership team are responsible for writing and maintaining the strategy statement, we recommend that governing boards are involved in discussions on how it is presented. This will help ensure that the statement is transparent, SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bounded) and explains the following:

- how much pupil premium funding the school has been allocated for the current funding year;
- how the school intends to use the pupil premium funding that it has been allocated (specific activities, strategies, initiatives etc.);
- the rationale for allocating the funding on specific activities, strategies, initiatives etc. including the barriers they will help to overcome;
- the intended impact of allocating the funding this way, and
- the effect of the previous year's pupil premium funding on the eligible pupils and more widely.

[Pupil premium strategy statement templates](#) are available on the gov.uk website.

Section 4: Monitoring the impact of Pupil Premium spending



Effective monitoring of the school’s pupil premium spending against the agreed strategy should enable the board to do the following:

- establish whether the funding is having a positive impact on eligible pupils;
- challenge and support school leaders to make informed decisions about revising the strategy, future spending decisions, and
- demonstrate their accountability (see section 5)

Whilst there is no set monitoring process the governing board (or delegated committee as appropriate) should expect to receive regular reports from school leaders (e.g. once a term) that cover the current context (number of eligible pupils, previous performance , spending to date etc.) alongside an assessment of the spending against the intended outcomes/impact referred to in the strategy document. For example:

Initiative/intervention	Success criteria	Spending to date	Impact to date	Evidence
School breakfast club	Improving attendance and readiness to learn for the most disadvantaged pupils	10,000	Improved attendance and punctuality of targeted pupils	<i>Reference to attendance data against target</i>

The governing board should look at internal progress and attainment (see section 1) for pupil premium eligible pupils as evidence that the funding is having the intended impact, and to inform their questions to school leaders about the strategy. A set of example questions for governing boards to ask is available on the [NGA knowledge centre](https://www.nga.org.uk/knowledge-centre).

Appointing a link governor for pupil premium

Appointing link governors to specific areas of responsibility has long been seen as a useful way for governing boards to monitor these areas at the same time as making the best use of an individual’s experience and skills set.

A governor linked to the pupil premium would be expected to maintain an overview and take an active role in any governing board or committee level discussion regarding spending and impact. Their contribution should be informed by their evaluation of relevant data, routine discussions with key members of staff and case studies that demonstrate impact.

It’s important for boards to recognise that linking a governor to the pupil premium does not remove the collective responsibility for monitoring spending and impact, rather it should complement the monitoring process.

Section 5: Being accountable for pupil premium spending



Being accountable for pupil premium spending is more than a compliance activity. It is an opportunity for the governing board to demonstrate the high aspirations and ambition it has for all pupils and explain the difference that the school's planning and teaching is making to them.

Publishing information on the school's website

The governing board is responsible for ensuring the school meets the requirement of the DfE to publish their pupil premium statement (see section 3) that includes the following details:

- how much pupil premium the school has received for the current funding year;
- a summary of the barriers to educational achievement faced by eligible pupils;
- how the pupil premium will address these barriers and reasons for this approach;
- how the school will measure the impact of the funding;
- the date when the pupil premium strategy will be reviewed;
- how the pupil premium funding allocated for the funding was spent, and its effect (impact), and on the educational attainment of eligible pupils.

This is an important responsibility and **should be managed/kept under review through the governing board's business cycle, supported by the clerk.**

Ofsted inspection

Ofsted inspections will consider the governing boards' oversight of pupil premium spending when assessing how well it discharges its core function of overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure that its money is well spent.

Ofsted will, though, consider the impact of the school's curriculum on the most disadvantaged pupils. This includes pupil premium eligible pupils, but is not limited to that group. They will gather evidence on how the pupil premium is spent, with what rationale and to what intended end. They will also consider the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils based on published outcomes data.

Governors and trustees should be prepared to discuss the school's pupil premium strategy in their meeting with the school inspectors, both in specific terms and as part of a wider conversation about how the board monitors and addresses any subjects and pupils who aren't achieving (i.e. the curriculum isn't setting them up for the next stage).

The [school inspection handbook](#) clearly states that inspectors will not ask schools to provide any documents or plans in relation to the pupil premium other than its pupil premium strategy. It will also not require school-generated data on the pupil premium, such as gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils within classes or within the school.

Appendix



Further reading

Department for Education Resources

- [Pupil Premium: Effective Use and Accountability](#)
- [Pupil Premium: Conditions of Grant](#)
- [Pupil Premium: Strategy Statements Guidance](#)

Education Endowment Foundation Resources

- [EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium](#)
- [EEF Toolkit](#)
- [EEF Guide to Becoming an Evidence-Informed School Governor and Trustee](#)

Published research

[“Spotlight on Disadvantage”](#) is the title of the research report published by the NGA in 2018, which looks at the role of governing boards in spending, monitoring and evaluating the pupil premium.

[The Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) is a charity providing important research into social injustice and is committed to tackling poverty in the United Kingdom. Specifically, their research into children’s educational attainment provides good evidence and policy recommendations for governors/trustees to understand the problems facing young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.