

Pupil Premium Strategy Update and Questions to Consider

Two particularly important changes from the DfE to note include:

To give schools greater certainty in planning their expenditure, recruitment, teaching practice and staff development, we encourage schools to produce a three-year strategy for Pupil Premium use, with light touch annual reviews. This will enable school leaders to take a longer view of the support to be provided through the grant and align it with wider school improvement strategy.

We recommend that the statement should be completed and reviewed at the beginning of the academic year, although it should be a 'living document' that can evolve over the course of the year.

The new requirements try to tackle a reductive and potentially cumbersome 'list of spending' approach by providing a simplified template for external stakeholders, whilst also offering some challenging questions and supporting guidance to ensure the online information is supported by evidence, best practice and best process.

The new strategy document also responds to workload concerns, with a direct focus on creating a concise and useful strategy document.

When planning to write a purposeful statement, questions leaders may want to think about are:

What are the key issues to address to raise the attainment of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils in your school? What are the barriers to learning? Be specific. Focus on the causes, not the symptoms. Avoid generalisations such as 'poor literacy'. Lower rates of progress are not barriers, but outcomes.

What is the evidence you have used to identify those issues? This is critical. One of the reasons Pupil Premium has not had the impact it might have is that barriers are sometimes assumptions. A strategy that is not informed by a robust analysis of need is like trying to bake a cake without a recipe.

What programmes, actions, approaches will you adopt to overcome those issues? It is important to remember to focus on learning, and to focus on what is in the school's gift. Schools can't solve all societal problems. Be wary of chasing the wind when overly focusing on things beyond your control. Make sure that the activities tackle the identified need. And... the adage that we can always get better at what we do should not be forgotten. The **EEF's tiered approach** helps structure an approach that focuses primarily on the classroom.

What research evidence exists to support your chosen approach? It is important to use evidence to inform decision making, not just looking for evidence to justify decisions already taken. How does the evidence align with professional judgement and values. Does it fit with your school context?

What will we expect to see when we visit your school?

This is important. Research from the [National Governors Association](#) found that there was often a gap between what was said on Pupil Premium website statements and what is happening in schools.

What outcomes are you looking to achieve, and how will you know you have achieved them? It is really important to be specific here. Remember that those involved in the implementation of a strategy are unlikely to be able to evaluate robustly and objectively. Outcomes should cover short, medium and longer periods. Some strategies may take longer to embed and have a sustained impact. Remember that evaluation is about assessing whether something has worked, not trying to prove it has done.

What might not work as well as you'd like it to? Carry out a 'pre-mortem' about what might go wrong, to anticipate challenges. The EEF's '[Putting Evidence to Work](#)' [guidance report](#) can support this approach to careful prioritisation and implementation.