



Ein cyf/Our ref: MB/LG/4487/14

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7 November 2014

Dear Mohammad,

During plenary on 24 September, you asked what discussions I have had with ministerial colleagues to address educational underachievement amongst Gypsy and Traveller pupils. I have since written to the Minister for Education and Skills to raise this issue with him and I am able to expand upon my answer in plenary.

It is clear attendance and attainment outcomes for Gypsy and Traveller pupils remain unacceptably low. Although this is mainly the responsibility of the Minister for Education and Skills, I have spoken to the Minister regarding the challenge of closing the educational attainment gap experienced by these communities. Despite the best efforts of dedicated Traveller Education Services across Wales, it is clear the current system is not achieving the required improvement.

In the Welsh Government's draft budget for 2015/16 several education grants to Local Authorities, including the specific Traveller education grant, will be amalgamated to offer flexibility on a local level and to ensure Local Authorities can put the funding to maximum effect. Although the current Traveller education grant has made some significant improvements in attendance levels and modest improvements in attainment outcomes, the status quo is not achieving the aim of closing the attainment gap between Gypsies and Travellers and other pupil groups.

Local Authorities have been invited to help shape a new educational outcomes framework which will accompany the amalgamated grant. The development of this framework will be led by the Minister for Education and Skills and he has assured me measuring the outcomes of Gypsies and Travellers will be included in this work.

The intention is to have a new outcomes framework in place before the new financial year to ensure Gypsy and Traveller pupils are not disadvantaged by the grant amalgamation proposal. This will provide us with the opportunity to consider different approaches to ensure improved educational outcomes for these communities and, by extension, improved life chances in the long-term.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Lesley Griffiths AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Cymunedau a Threchu Tlodi
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty