

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Grant gwella addysg: Plant Sipsiwn, Roma a Theithwyr, a phlant o leiafrifoedd ethnig | Education Improvement Grant: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic Children

EIG 19

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INTRODUCTION

Challenges facing pupils of minority ethnic backgrounds

Many minority ethnicity children and young people (CYP) in Wales face challenges, ranging from high levels of social disadvantage, to frequent experience of racism, to having to adapt to an unfamiliar country and culture knowing little or nothing of the languages of Wales. Yet, many of these CYP are resilient, rise to the challenges and, in time, manage to achieve well in school. Those who are welcomed, whose identities are positively acknowledged and who are given appropriately tailored educational support for language development and learning can go on to succeed.

Long-term gains

The kinds of support and differentiated teaching provision offered by local authority specialists and school staff to such learners yield gains over the long-term. Helping an EAL/WAL learner to develop a new language, or building the trust of a Traveller family to improve their children's school attendance, can take a long time and the educational outcomes of such support may only be seen several years later. Since at least 1992, discretely funded, targeted support has been provided for minority ethnic learners in schools across Wales, with teams of teachers becoming more widespread and better qualified as time has gone on. Concurrent with this provision, the attainment percentages of most minority ethnicity groupings have progressively increased and, in some cases, overtaken the percentages for the majority White British pupil population. Although improving, the figures for some Black, Mixed White and Black, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller ethnicities have not shown such consistent increase and this needs to be addressed with greater focus. (See: <http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/121119ethnicminoritypupilsen.pdf> and <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/academic-achievement-pupil-characteristics/?tab=previous&lang=en>)

Current high attainment figures highlight the success of past support provided by sustained dedicated funding and specialist interventions. The outcomes for CYP who are no longer receiving such support as a result of the recent changes in policy and funding are likely to become evident in coming years.

Demographic changes

The demographic profile of Wales' pupil population is continuously changing. Recently, an increase in numbers of CYP coming directly from EU nations, many of whom arrive with little or no English, has changed the profile of the *Any Other White Background* grouping, with attainment percentages dropping, indicating a clear need for continued support. Roma from Eastern Europe and refugee and asylum seeker

children from places like Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria have also increased, some coming with considerable personal, social, educational and linguistic needs. The education system needs a body of specialist expertise and flexibility in its allocation to adapt to such changing circumstances and meet these learners' needs.

Policy and funding changes

At a time when numbers and needs have been increasing, funding and targeted provision for these groupings of learners has been systematically reduced, removed or generalised within broad initiatives for 'all learners', with a reduction in accountability for targeted spending and interventions. The 2014 policy on Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education in Wales indicated a need for capacity-building, yet many of the specialist teams tasked with delivering this have been reduced, with more funding delegated to schools.

EVIDENCE

Most of the following evidence has been collated through analysis of Welsh Government data, correspondence with Welsh Government and Local Authority officials and from Freedom of Information requests made to all 22 Local Authorities (LAs) in Wales in 2015, to identify some of the short-term impacts of the recent changes in policy and funding for minority ethnic achievement and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller education. Greater detail including charts illustrating the statistics, further analyses of data pertaining to poverty and attainment and copies of documentation are available but have been omitted for brevity.

FOI update 2016

Another FOI request was made on 17th October 2016 to update information for 2015/16 and 2016/17 but several returns from LAs have not been received by the required deadline or have been returned incomplete, so an accurate picture for this year is not possible to provide. Provisional indications from the incomplete 2016 FOI returns suggest that:

- Consortia and individual local authorities are making very different choices about these areas of provision, with some maintaining levels of funding and support and others making considerable cuts or changes;
- aggregated across Wales, there has been a further reduction of over £0.5m directed to minority ethnic and Gypsy Traveller education from within EIG and additional local authority funds;
- approximately £0.5m more of the allocated funding has been devolved to schools, away from specialist central services;
- the number of 'eligible' pupils has increased by several hundred in the past year;
- there has been a further reduction in specialist staff numbers employed in these areas of work.

Teacher Training

A GTCW survey of NQTs in 2012 found that coverage of EAL was the least satisfactory element of their ITT courses and a 2015 British Council report on EAL in Initial Teacher Training in Wales (<https://eal.britishcouncil.org/information/eal-and-initial-teacher-education-wales>) found that substantial percentages of qualifying trainees felt inadequately prepared to meet EAL pupils' needs. The report also found that preparation for the relevant QTS standards was very inconsistent between courses. With the increased focus on schools and class teachers taking on the full responsibility of meeting the needs of minority ethnic and EAL/WAL learners, with far fewer centralised specialist support workers, this weakness is of particular concern.

All teachers should be adequately trained and equipped to inclusively meet the needs of all learners in their schools and they should take on full responsibility for the teaching and learning of minority ethnic, Roma,

Gypsy, Traveller and EAL/WAL pupils. However, it can sometimes be difficult to meet every child's needs without additional support, some pupils' needs extend beyond the classroom and partnerships are often required to ensure high quality provision and raise skill levels. The capacity and skillset of the current teacher workforce needs to be considerably developed before Wales is in a position to do away with its trained specialists in fields of work that are both important and very sensitive, and to delegate funding to schools without close accountability. The need for greater capacity-building and mainstreaming was highlighted in the 2014 Policy statement on Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education in Wales.

KEY POINTS

- 50 years of dedicated government funding to support the language development and achievement of minority ethnic pupils in schools has been brought to an end by the Labour-led Welsh Government, following Conservative-led Coalition policy changes in England in 2010, which are now being called into question by its own MPs.
- 40 years of dedicated government funding for Traveller Education has been brought to an end, also following policy in England.
- Both the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant (MEAG) and Gypsy Traveller Education Grant (GT Grant) were used primarily to employ frontline members of specialist staff working directly with pupils of minority ethnic and GRT backgrounds, who were in need of targeted support, and their families.
- In 2012, a Review of MEAG was commissioned by the Welsh Government (<http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/1877/1/110112meagfinalen.pdf>) and the consultation responses detailed in the appendices indicated overwhelming support for retention and increase of the grant with greater security of long-term funding with ring-fenced protection and tighter Terms and Conditions. There were some criticisms and suggested improvements, with a lack of consensus about the benefits of delegating some funding to schools but nothing in the review indicated that the MEAG should or would be done away with.
- Beginning with a 4.76% cut to the MEAG at the start of 2014/15, followed by additional in-year cuts of up to 15% and then the amalgamation of both the MEAG and GT grants with nine other education grant schemes to form the new general Education Improvement Grant for 2015/16, without ring-fenced areas of provision, the amount of funding made available to provide for pupils of these backgrounds was systematically reduced. The decision about how much of the EIG to allocate was devolved to Consortia and LAs. This EIG arrangement has continued into 2016/17.
- Between 2013/14 and 2015/16, the Welsh Government's funding for Minority Ethnic Achievement was reduced by -24.7% and funding for Gypsy Traveller Education provision was reduced by -7%; a combined reduction of £2.67m from £11.6m to £8.93m (-23%). This amount was the final combined contribution of these two grants to the EIG for 2015/16.
- According to figures provided by WG and LAs under FOI, between 2009/10 and 2015/16, minority ethnic and GRT pupil numbers increased by approximately 50%.
- The increase in pupil numbers, combined with the funding cuts, means that between 2009/10 and 2015/16 there was an effective reduction in the WG's average per pupil funding of -42.7% (or -47.7% if using the LA FOI figure for the end of 2014/15) for eligible minority ethnic pupils and -24.3% for GRT pupils. Between 2013/14 and 2015/16 alone, the effective reductions were -27.4% for minority ethnic pupils and -21.2% for GRT pupils.
- To ameliorate the severity of the WG's funding reductions on levels of provision, LAs increased the amount of additional funding drawn from other sources, or committed from within their EIG allocations, from £1.86m in 2013/14 to £2.95m in 2015/16. However, this still resulted in an overall reduction in total funding dedicated to these areas of £1.48m or -

11.1%. Provisional figures for 2016/17 suggest that several LAs have further reduced EIG allocations or additional contributions for these areas of provision.

- LA's have historically contributed varying amounts of additional funding to support provision in these areas but the removal of ring-fencing means allocations are no longer protected to any extent. Figures from the 2015 FOI responses show that within the period from 2013/14 to 2015/16, the per pupil allocation for minority ethnic achievement decreased in 20 of the 22 LAs, and the per pupil allocation for GT education decreased in 13 of the 18 LAs who had been in receipt of GT Grant funding in 2013/14. Not only that, but the range of variation between LAs' per pupil allocations increased. This variation means there is an even greater post-code lottery in which a minority ethnic, EAL/WAL, Gypsy, Roma or Traveller pupil gets significantly more or less funding per head, depending on which authority they are in. This contrasts markedly with the single per head amount for eFSM pupils allocated through the PDG.
- In Autumn 2014, the Welsh Government had recommended that at least 80% of the EIG funding should be devolved directly to schools. This would have completely decimated specialist services but, following intervention by ADEW and the WLGA, this recommendation was relaxed, allowing individual Consortia and LAs to decide how much to delegate. Despite the initial expressions of concern, the amount of money directed to support EMA and GT education provision that was devolved to schools increased by 571% from £349,795 to £2,347,443, between 2013/14 and 2015/16. For 2016/2017, provisional figures from FOI suggest this is now closer to £3m.
- By the end of August 2015, the impact of these policy changes and funding reductions had resulted in a combined reduction of FTE specialist EMA and GT staff of -17.7%.
- The reduction in White British/Welsh majority ethnicity staff was -16.2% and the reduction in Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic/Gypsy Traveller ethnicity staff was -21.8%. As these specialist services employ a sizeable proportion of the BAME and GT staff members working in education in Wales, there has been a disproportionate impact on minority ethnic workers within these services and consequently in the education workforce as a whole.
- The ratio of FTE specialist teaching staff to minority ethnic pupils went from 1:109 in 2013/14 to 1:161 at the end of the 2014/15 academic year. For EAL pupils at Stages A-C (those in most need of additional specialist input) the ratio went from 1:58 to 1:76. The 2016 FOI figures suggest this ratio is now even wider. Bearing in mind that the 21,377 (in 2015) EAL Stage A-C pupils are distributed widely across a large number of schools, provision of effective individualised support has become much more difficult.
- From 2013/14 to 2015/16, the ratio of FTE specialist GRT staff to GRT pupils went from 1:36 to 1:40. (Based on the GT Grant application figures which include GT children and young people who are in need of support but NOT registered in schools, the ratio went from 1:44 to 1:59.) When we consider that a class teacher to pupil ratio of 1:30 would be considered barely acceptable in a school, such a ratio is particularly unsatisfactory for pupils who are spread over a number of schools and sites, who may move between schools and between LAs, who may need to be supported out of school, and who are likely to have considerable educational, socio-economic and sometimes linguistic needs.
- During this time period from 2013/14 to 2016/17, when austerity has compelled the Welsh Government to make some difficult financial decisions and reductions in many areas, it has sought to preserve levels of funding for frontline school budgets to the benefit of all

children and young people. However, the cuts made to targeted, frontline support for minority ethnic, EAL/WAL and GRT pupils, in particular, have been disproportionately high by comparison. Combined with the impact on BAME staffing, there may be a case to make for breach of Equality legislation and potential racial discrimination.

Equality compliance

- Despite its many commitments and obligations under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) Wales Regulations 2011, the Welsh Government did not carry out Equality Impact Assessments of the decisions to make in-year cuts to the MEAG in 2014/15 or to terminate the MEAG and GT grant schemes by incorporating them in the EIG until months after the decisions had been made (the specific EIAs are dated April 2015, published on web as 19/05/15, although they confusingly include reference to two other dates, June 2014 for the in-year cuts and August 2014 for the two EIG EIAs). Several requests were made for the EIAs during 2014 and 2015 but they were not forthcoming in any form until April/May 2015).
- However, the Integrated Strategic Impact Assessment carried out for the Supplementary Budget in 2014, identified that the incorporation of the MEAG and GT Grants in the EIG and the accompanying reductions in funding: "... could reduce the positive impact on the protected characteristic of race".

"9.4 The grant for the education of Traveller's children and the minority ethnic achievement grant will merge together and then into the larger grant for school improvement. There will be a decrease to the overall quantum of funding in this area, this could reduce the positive impact on the protected characteristic of race and those below 16..." (pages 20, 21 <http://wales.gov.uk/funding/budget/draft-budget-2015-16/?lang=en>)

Despite the acknowledgement that the decrease in the quantum of funding 'could reduce the positive impact' (rather than 'could have a negative impact'), no consultation or search for evidence to assess the potential 'reduction in positive impact' was initiated. The inability to foresee that making these changes would result in a substantial (-17.7%) reduction in staffing from an area of specialist education provision for pupils with significant needs is quite astonishing.

- The individual EIA for the 2014/15 in-year cuts, even though it was written retrospectively, omitted any reference to the changes taking place relating to the EIG and was written as if the MEAG were continuing as a dedicated grant e.g.

"The MEAG supports children from ethnic minority backgrounds to acquire the language skills in English/Welsh to improve their chance of equality of opportunity in their school careers, and beyond, so that they will be able to reach their full potential.

The grant continues to represent significant Welsh Government funding in 2014-15 and reflects the Welsh Government's commitment to equal opportunity for this learner group.

Local authorities are able to supplement this funding with additional resource from RSG. This reflects the Welsh Government's commitment to equal opportunity for this learner group.

Local Authorities and Regional Education Consortia are being tasked with redesigning service provision to be more focussed, better targeted and more outcomes focussed. In this way children with EAL (and WAL) will continue to have their needs met and the support they need to overcome barriers to learning associated with ethnic minority background through school improvement policy and practice."

(page 13 - 150519-in-year-changes-to-the-minority-ethnic-achievement-grant-2014-15-en)

- The EIAs for both the MEAG in-year funding reductions and the incorporation of the MEAG and GT Grant in the EIG, whilst acknowledging 'potential' for negative impact, concluded that the likely impact was None/Negligible in respect of all protected equality characteristics including race, religion and belief or non-belief.

"The primary aim of the MEAG was to support children from minority ethnic backgrounds and there is the potential for a change in the funding arrangements to have a negative impact on services delivered by the local authority.

However the impact should be negligible as these learners should continue to be supported through the new grant arrangements" (page 10 - 150519-incorporation-of-the-minority-ethnic-achievement-grant-in-the-education-improvement-grant-2015-16-en)

"Gypsies and Travellers are recognised ethnic groups and depending on the priorities of local authorities there is the potential for a negative impact on the race strand. However, the impact should be negligible as these learners should continue to be supported through the new grant arrangements." (page 9 - 150519-incorporation-of-the-specific-grant-for-the-education-of-gypsy-and-traveller-children-in-the-education-improvement-grant-2015-16-en)

- Large portions of the text from the EIA for the MEAG in-year cuts were copied into the EIA produced for 'incorporation in the EIG', some sections with no modification, adding weight to the idea that the EIAs were treated in a cursory, tokenistic manner e.g. the following were copied directly without recognition that the second EIA concerned the termination of the MEAG with the reduced funding amount being transferred to a non-ring-fenced grant:

"MEAG funding supports Articles 28, 29 & 30 of the UNCRC" (page13)

"The grant funding is delivered to support the education of this cohort of children, and is not to specifically designed to eliminate unlawful discrimination or harassment." (page 16 - 150519-incorporation-of-the-minority-ethnic-achievement-grant-in-the-education-improvement-grant-2015-16-en)

Some sections do not directly answer the questions asked in the EIA template.

- There was little consideration of hard data, and what was cited illustrates the success of provision under the MEAG, rather than indicating a need for change. Criticism was levelled at provision for Gypsy and Traveller pupils, suggesting insufficient improvement but the

claim that a different approach is required 'based on the evidence' is not supported by any evidence to indicate that the proposed changes will improve performance.

"Despite the resources directed at the educational achievement of gypsy and traveller children, the rate of progress for some has not demonstrated sufficient improvement.

The Welsh Government believes that based on the evidence a different approach is required and that local authorities need to take greater responsibility for improving the life chances for certain cohorts of these children, supported by a robust delivery framework. Within the new funding regime, local authorities will decide the level of financial investment they wish to make in this area from the Education Improvement Grant and explore other means of ensuring that their needs are met."
(pages 4 and 5 - 150519-incorporation-of-the-specific-grant-for-the-education-of-gypsy-and-traveller-children-in-the-education-improvement-grant-2015-16-en)

In the Rewriting the Future programme (2014: 12) for tackling the link between poverty and educational disadvantage, the Welsh Government used comparative data for England to highlight how much Wales needs to improve in that area. Comparison of 2014 attainment figures for Gypsy/Roma pupils in England and Wales shows that more pupils of these backgrounds in Wales are succeeding, with 23.4% gaining the Level 2 Threshold and 12.5% gaining the Level 2 Threshold inclusive, compared to England's figure of only 11.6% attaining 5 A*-C GCSEs. (Wales figures for Travellers are not disclosed). On this evidence, there is a case to maintain and perhaps expand provision as it is.

(<http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/150331-academic-achievement-pupil-characteristics-2014.pdf> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-and-equivalent-attainment-by-pupil-characteristics-2014>).

- No formal consultations were carried out with the key stakeholders: pupils and their parents, over the changes and potential reductions in specialist support for pupils.
- In the EIAs, two meetings were misleadingly cited as being a part of the formal EIA consultation process; one from 12 November 2014 with the MEALA group and GT Forum LA representatives, and another from 21 January 2015, which was an annual scheduled meeting between the Minister for Education and EALAW (the professional association for EAL/WAL in Wales). The record of the November workshop, which was not for 'evaluating potential equality impact' but for 'managing transition to the EIG', shows that the delegates who were present expressed 'considerable disquiet' about the funding cuts and proposed changes they were presented with. Whilst they identified some potential positives of more collaborative working at Consortium level, they were deeply concerned about many of the implications and the impact they would have on pupil support and staffing. These concerns were not included in the EIAs as potential impacts, despite this being a requirement of the EIA review process. Nor do they appear to have been heeded, as no changes were made to the funding and policy decisions.
- Page 24 of the Annual Report on Equality 2014-2015 (<http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/151123-annual-report-2014-2015-en.pdf>) states:

"Equality Impact Assessments

The Welsh Government, as with other devolved public bodies covered by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, is required to carry out Equality Impact Assessments in respect of protected groups, across its proposed policies and practices, those it has decided to review, and the changes it proposes to make.”

Pages 25 and 26 outline the need for filling evidence gaps, development of action plans and future reviews. There appears to be little evidence that these commitments were acted upon in respect of the MEAG and GT grants. On page 38, both grants are discussed in the present tense, as if still extant and continuing, but at the bottom of the page, the last three lines mention:

“In the draft Budget statement in September 2014, a new single grant funding stream, the Education Improvement Grant, was announced for introduction in 2015-2016. This new funding stream will draw together separate grant arrangements, including those for minority ethnic and Gypsy and Traveller attainment.” (page 38 of the Annual Report on Equality 2014-2015 <http://gov.wales/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/151123-annual-report-2014-2015-en.pdf>)

This is the only comment included in the report on the MEAG and GT Grant funding cuts and their incorporation within the EIG.

- The Equality Impact Assessment for the Rewriting the Future Programme also includes some potentially misleading comments, which have been cited as arguments to support the decision to terminate the MEAG and GT education grants (<http://gov.wales/docs//equality-impact-assessments/141106e-EIA-Rewriting-the-Future-Programme.pdf>):

“The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals varies by ethnic group³. Compared to the average, high proportions of Gypsies and Traveller pupils are eFSM. There are also higher than average proportions of Black African, Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Black Caribbean, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi pupils. The percentage of Indian and Chinese pupils who are eligible for FSM is below the average for all pupils.”

“The programme should produce a positive impact that will be felt disproportionately by groups with high proportions of eFSM pupils. Those pupils coming from families where English is not the first language at home should also benefit from the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision.”

“There are no aspects of the Programme which involve the redirection of resources away from particular ethnic groups.” (p9, 10)

- Firstly, if a grouping of learners experiences disadvantage that is *disproportionate* by comparison to other groupings, then action taken to address that inequality is *proportionate* to the disadvantage – the grouping as a whole will not benefit from a disproportionately positive impact but only a proportionate one that attempts to bring about greater equality.
- Secondly, a proportion of the GRT pupils who have benefited from the GT Education Grant-funded support of GRT specialists are not on school rolls, and others move from one school to another mid-year or from year to year, so the allocation of PDG funding to the school where they were registered in the previous year may not benefit them at all.
- Thirdly, in the statement that *“Those pupils coming from families where English is not the first language at home should also benefit from the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision”*, it is unclear what the explicit benefit on pupils will be. Most EAL CYP learn

English much more quickly in school than their parents do, so this is just a vague generalisation.

- Lastly, the money taken from the reduced grants amalgamated to form the EIG (including the MEAG and GT grant) amounted to a similar increase in the Pupil Deprivation Grant from 2014/15 to 2015/16: approximately £10m came out of the grant reductions at transition and the PDG was increased by approximately £10m that year, so the assertion that *“There are no aspects of the Programme which involve the redirection of resources away from particular ethnic groups”* could be regarded with some suspicion. The PDG is not intended for targeting the needs of EAL learners (as the MEAG was), certainly not if they are nFSM, and it has no ring-fencing for minority ethnic or GRT learners who are eFSM. Without a strict accountability framework for how these pupils are actually benefiting ‘proportionately’ or ‘disproportionately’ from the PDG in schools, it is difficult to regard this statement as supportable, or to evaluate the extent that the transition to the new arrangements is directly benefiting minority ethnic learners in the way that the MEAG and GT Grant did.
- The evidence from the 2015 FOI data referred to in this paper, which shows that the impacts on pupil funding and specialist staffing have been considerable, together with the weaknesses evident in the processes relating to Equality compliance, suggest that the Welsh Government has fallen well short of its responsibilities in respect of Equality duties, consultation and in meeting the particular needs of pupils with the protected characteristics of Black, Asian, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and other minority ethnicities.
- It is my opinion that a thorough review of how the needs of CYP from these backgrounds should best be developed in conjunction with the new national curriculum for Wales is urgently required.

ADDENDUM

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT INFORMATION

Historical background

Funding and provision for minority ethnic achievement and EAL/WAL in England and Wales

For almost 50 years, dedicated funding has been in place to support pupils of minority ethnic backgrounds in education in England and Wales.

In the 1960s, it was recognised that many members of minority ethnic and migrant communities, especially children and young people, faced a number of linguistic, cultural and educational challenges, which were distinct from those of the majority ethnic White British population and which were not being adequately addressed by mainstream education or other public services.

In 1966, funding administered by Section 11 of the Home Office was provided to address these issues, and was used to support the teaching of English (then referred to as English as a Second Language or ESL) and to promote integration.

Through the 1970s and 1980s, it became apparent that teaching children and young people ESL, often in segregated teaching units, was not the most effective or equitable approach and, in fact, the education system itself – the curriculum, the school environment and the attitudes of teachers and pupils to diversity – needed to change in order to ensure a genuinely inclusive school experience for all pupils.

Many local authorities set up Multicultural Education, ESL or Race Equality services to promote diversity and equality throughout the curriculum and school life, as well as to work directly with pupils. The majority of services were centralised and they employed teachers and bilingual teaching assistants to work in schools, but with the flexibility to move responsively to meet changing needs and pupil distributions.

During this time, only a small number of local authorities in Wales accessed Section 11 funding but a few others used their own core education funding to pay for individuals or small teams of teachers to work with early stage ESL learners and to promote multicultural education and race equality.

In 1991, the Section 11 Grant was reorganised to make a more accountable system in which local authorities had to bid for funding based on a quantifiable assessment of need, with clear targets for monitoring expenditure and pupil progress. This provided an opportunity for a number of local authorities in Wales to make successful bids and set up new teams, initially funded for 3-5 years, greatly expanding the range of professional expertise in Wales.

In 1994, Section 11 funding was transferred from the Home Office to the Department for Education and renamed the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG).

Under the national curriculum assessment arrangements, more substantial data on pupil attainment became available and, when these data were analysed by ethnicity, they revealed

patterns of low attainment percentages for several minority ethnic groupings. As a result, in the context of a wider agenda to improve educational standards for all pupils, work with minority ethnic pupils was refocused towards raising achievement outcomes, rather than just giving attention to developing English and encouraging multicultural education.

Also around this time, in recognition of the fact that many minority ethnic pupils already used at least one other language prior to learning English, ESL was renamed English as an Additional Language or EAL (English being an addition to their linguistic repertoire).

Following the devolution of responsibility for education policy to Wales, in 1999, the EMAG was retained as a discrete, ring-fenced funding stream and was later amalgamated with a separate Asylum Seeker Grant, being renamed as the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant (MEAG).

Over time, all 22 local authorities in Wales bid for and were allocated amounts of funding via the MEAG, based on numbers of pupils, weighted according to age, levels of English proficiency and asylum seeker status. MEAG funding was used to provide achievement and language support for pupils and to offer professional development to schools, predominantly through centralised teams of specialist workers. Many of the central services encouraged their staff to pursue Masters level qualifications to ensure a high standard of professional development within this specialist field.

During the late 2000s, the growing numbers of minority ethnic pupils in Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, together with the broader focus on raising achievement, led to the MEAG terms and conditions being widened to include those learning in English-medium, Welsh-medium and bilingual contexts. Although Welsh language provision had historically been funded and provided via other means, it was considered important to recognise that minority ethnic pupils in Wales needed to learn both English and Welsh as Additional Languages to succeed in school, and that their needs were distinctive. This resulted in the use of the abbreviations EAL/WAL and CIY/SIY in Cymraeg. However, to date, there has not been any official clarification of how to address both effectively within the existing education policy frameworks.

The good practice that has been built up over the past two and a half decades across Wales has yielded a progressive improvement in the numbers of minority ethnic pupils succeeding in compulsory education. The grouped attainment figures of several minority ethnicities are higher than the national average, but there are still significant gaps in:

- the consistency of Initial Teacher Training in these areas;
- teachers' professional knowledge and confidence in meeting pupils' needs;
- the implementation of good practice in both additional language development and multicultural education;
- capacity to meet the multiple needs of pupils who are asylum seekers, refugees, EU Roma, early stage EAL/WAL learners and those with both language development and Additional Learning Needs;
- the attainment figures of a number of specific minority ethnic groupings, at various key stages, especially those of Black, Mixed and GRT backgrounds (see below on Attainment).

The effort to ensure equality in education for pupils of all racial and ethnic backgrounds and to create a genuinely inclusive mainstream education system in all schools is unfinished business – there is still much work to do. In the current political and populist media climate, it would be too easy to lower the priority given to these groupings of learners but the long-term consequences for their integration, academic success and social mobility, and for community cohesion in Wales, in general should not be underestimated. Having communities of people who might feel disadvantaged, unsupported or discriminated against is not a positive thing for a cohesive Wales.

Funding and provision for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller education

Discrete funding for addressing the varied educational and other needs of Gypsies and Travellers also pre-dates devolution in Wales.

In England and Wales, dedicated funding has been provided in a variety of ways and through different streams since at least the 1970s, following the 1967 Plowden Report which identified Gypsies as “probably the most severely deprived children in the country”, arguing that committed teams of professionals were needed to successfully “arrest the cycle” of educational disadvantage they experienced (cited in Foster and Norton, *The Equal Rights Review*, vol 8. 2012: 102/3).

Through the 1980s and 1990s, centrally-funded Traveller Education Services developed their professional practice, engaging with communities and families, liaising between agencies, working with schools and helping to raise pupil achievement.

Funding was provided for under a number of Education Acts, including Section 488 of the 1996 Education Act grants ‘for education of Travellers and displaced persons’.

At one point in England, the funding was combined with the EMAG for a short period to form the EMTAG, before being separated again in recognition of differences between the two areas of work.

During the 2000s, within the National Strategies in England, projects were targeted under the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme (GRTAP) and guidance materials were produced for schools and other professionals. A few years ago, however, ring-fencing for GRT education funding in England was removed, and sources of finance for this area of work were transferred to the general Children’s Services Grant, then the Area Based Grant, then funding to support ‘vulnerable families’. The shift towards a framework of ‘universal services which support every child’ effectively reduced the focused attention given to pupils of GRT backgrounds and led to a decline in central Traveller Education Services (Foster and Norton, *The Equal Rights Review*, vol 8. 2012: 104).

In Wales, following devolution, the Section 488 Grant continued to be used as the basis for funding at a 75% matched-rate. It was increased on several occasions between 1999 and 2013/14, and was commonly referred to as the Traveller Education Grant or Gypsy Traveller (GT) Education Grant.

Prior to 2015/16, nineteen LAs have bid for GT Grant funding but only ten LAs have had centralised Traveller Education Services, with at least two LAs running combined Minority Ethnic and Traveller Education Services. Others have appointed individual officers or teachers with dedicated responsibility for overseeing this area of provision. Most specialist workers have targeted a wide range of issues and needs, building relationships with GRT communities and families, supporting children with education and other matters, working both within and outside of school premises, liaising between agencies and across authorities, teaching, training staff, and advocating on behalf of GRT pupils and their families.

Originally, most provision was focused on Gypsies and Travellers of White British and Irish backgrounds. However, since European Union (EU) Accession broadened the range of nationalities eligible for free movement within the EU, numbers of EU Roma pupils have increased in both England and Wales. Many pupils face multiple social, racial and educational disadvantages. Most have English and Welsh as Additional Language learning needs as well as other social, cultural, physical, psychological and educational needs. Consequently, in recent years, EU Roma pupils have been deemed eligible for funded support from both the MEAG and the GT Education Grant in Wales.

Together, the British, Irish and EU groupings are often referred to collectively as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils.

Data

Collecting accurate data on GRT CYP and their backgrounds has long been problematic, often leading to underestimations of population figures and support needs. CYP may move as their families travel, some may not be registered on school rolls, some do not have their ethnicity accurately recorded on school databases (many not wanting to declare it for fear of discrimination) and there is quite a high drop-out rate from formal schooling as pupils get older. The data that are available from schools reveal that a large proportion of GRT CYP are from low income households, a substantial number have Special or Additional Learning Needs, and the grouped attainment figures at all Key Stages are the lowest of all the ethnicity groupings, especially at Key Stage 4. GRT CYP also tend to experience a high level of racism and discrimination both in and out of school. The nature and extent of their needs make GRT CYP one of the groupings most in need of targeted funding and provision.

For several reasons, including those above, accurate figures for numbers of GRT CYP in Wales are difficult to obtain. When an FOI request was made of LAs and the WG in 2015, it yielded three different numbers, revealing an issue about the adequacy of data collection processes:

- PLASC – the official record of pupils ethnicity as recorded in schools SIMS for GRT pupils on roll in Jan 2015 = 891
- Local Authority FOI request responses – a mixture of LA PLASC records and numbers of other pupils known to be in schools but not recorded in schools' SIMS in Jan 2015 = 1587
- WG GT Grant Local Authority submissions – the total number of GRT pupils known to be attending schools and not attending schools: on roll, recorded on SIMS, not on roll, not recorded on SIMS, not in school but in need of off-site support = 2542*

There is a similar difficulty in identifying accurate numbers of other minority ethnic pupils:

- PLASC - the official record of pupils ethnicity as recorded in schools SIMS for pupils on roll in Jan 2015 = 34692
- MEAG submission (rolled over from 2013/14) - 39658
- LA FOI request – 43601*

*Local authority Grant submissions were based on numbers of CYP collected by staff working in schools and communities, with CYP and families, compiling lists of CYP they knew were in schools or were in need of educational support, not just those entered into the schools' SIMS databases.

Attainment

The grouped attainment figures of a number of minority ethnicity groupings are still below the national average and, in some cases, decline throughout schooling rather than narrow the gap. This is particularly the case for certain Black African, Caribbean and Mixed ethnicity groupings.

Through the 1990s and 2000s, notable progress was made in narrowing the attainment gaps between the figures of several ethnicity groupings and the national figures for All Pupils. In Wales, the figures for some minority ethnicity groupings have improved significantly with a number of groupings having percentages that are near or above the national figures.

A match-funded EU Convergence Fund project in Wales, targeting secondary age pupil achievement between 2010 and 2013 succeeded in increasing the percentage of targeted minority ethnic pupils achieving 5 A*-C at GCSE by 9%, and contributed to a doubling of the national percentage of all minority ethnic pupils achieving this target outcome during the same period, compared to the increase in the figure for All pupils, nationally.

Stage A-C EAL/WAL learners are in particular need of targeted support for several years in order to access the curriculum, demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and to develop their English and Welsh language.

With the right support, most EAL/WAL pupils make good progress, 'catching up' with their peers in English and Welsh over time and, when they approach age-appropriate proficiency, the percentages of EAL/WAL pupils at Stages D and E achieving the target levels in tests and examinations are higher than the national figures.

Nevertheless, every year, there are new arrivals, many of whom have little or no English or Welsh and who need a great deal of support to adapt to their new situation, to learn about school-life and the education system, to learn how to read, write, speak and understand English and Welsh and to make up gaps in their linguistic and curriculum knowledge. There are also many individual pupils who do not manage to catch up in time for formal examinations or to achieve well enough through their schooling to realise their academic potential.

At a national level, attainment gaps remain for some ethnicity groupings. The needs of many GRT CYP are multiple and considerable and their grouped attainment figures are the lowest of all the ethnicity groupings. The figures for several of the Black and Mixed ethnicity groupings are also lower than average or decline to become so by KS4, which is a matter of ongoing concern.

There is clearly a need to continue improving the quality of education provision and to maintain support dedicated to addressing the particular needs of minority ethnic, GRT and EAL/WAL pupils.

Consequently, it is clear that the education system in Wales is still not adequately addressing all of the issues pertaining to minority ethnic achievement and there remains a distinct need for targeted interventions and support, dedicated funding and well-qualified specialist staff to work with schools and pupils.