

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 27

Ymateb gan : Cyngor Bro Morgannwg
Response from : Vale of Glamorgan Council

From 2015–16, the Gypsy Children and Traveller Children Grant and the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant were merged into the new Education Improvement Grant. What impact has this had on the levels of educational support available to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and Minority Ethnic children, and their educational outcomes?

(If this is a concern to you, how should this be addressed?)

- In the Vale of Glamorgan, support for ME/EAL pupils is delivered through a small centralised service. Schools currently receive targeted support for underachieving EAL learners with lower levels of language acquisition. The team provides strategies to build capacity in schools in order for them to support the language learning of their EAL pupils.
- This funding stream is used within the context of school improvement. The improvement of outcomes for this group of learners is the local authority focus for this funding stream. The centralised team previously sat in School Improvement Service and for the past two years, the team has sat in the Schools Improvement and Inclusion Service. The focus to raise attainment of ME and EAL pupils has remained the same.
- Support for Traveller pupils is provided on a needs led basis by a small centralised service consisting of Learning Support Assistant's in 4 schools across the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Staff retention continues to be a challenge because the contracts are short term and aligned with the financial year. Longer term contracts would support staff retention.

- Reduced funding results in reduced provision; which can adversely impact on pupil attainment.
- It is too soon to measure the impact of the merger with the two funding streams into this funding stream.

Would any such impact have been the same had the grants remained ring fenced with annual reductions?

- Since the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant and All Wales Gypsy and Traveller Education grant have been merged we have not been consulted regarding data collection; including pupil numbers, Key Stages or Levels of Language Acquisition.
- We have limited evidence of what pupil data the current funding allocations are based on.
- MEAG previously required Local Authorities to submit bids to WG to include Pupil numbers and Levels of Language Acquisition per year group from Nursery 1 to Year 13 for EAL pupils and year group totals for Non-EAL Minority Ethnic pupils.
- Gypsy and Traveller Education grant previously required Local Authorities to collate pupil numbers annually (usually in February) on roll in schools.
- This method was flawed as Gypsy and Traveller pupil numbers vary widely on a daily/weekly/monthly basis due to the intrinsically transient nature of their lifestyles.
- Again there is limited evidence knowledge of what pupil data the Gypsy and Traveller Education grant allocations have been based on since 2015–16.
- Previous funding was weighted to provide most funding for older pupils with the lowest levels of language acquisition and greatest need.
- Again we have limited evidence of any such weightings having been applied to these allocations.

How effective are other Welsh Government policies and strategies for supporting the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic children?

(If this is a concern to you, how should this be addressed?)

- Centralised Services seem to be the most effective vehicle currently to raise awareness in schools.
- WG are still to produce a 'toolkit' of capacity building strategies to enable teachers to competently identify and meet the needs of minority ethnic pupils in their classrooms.
- WG have also yet to develop, as promised, an assessment tool to establish, monitor and measure the progress of EAL pupils Levels of Language Acquisition in Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing. This was developed as a local authority EAL assessment tool.
- WG have recently provided free follow up training with Show Racism the Red Card 'Promoting Equality and Tackling Racism'.
- As with the original free training event the majority of participants are service providers and not schools.
- Schools are increasingly reluctant to release class teachers due to the impact on pupil outcomes and supply cover costs.

What more could be done to support the educational attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and Minority Ethnic children:

in schools;

- To be allowed to disaggregate outcomes for Gypsy and Traveller pupils with low literacy levels and gaps in education and/or no prior education
- Flexibility with attendance data. Schools feel they are being penalised for supporting their Gypsy and Traveller pupils and families

by Local Authorities;

- The Vale of Glamorgan recognises the importance and value of supporting ME/EAL and Traveller pupils on roll in schools across the local authority.

by regional consortia;

- Link with services to verify pupil data in advance of funding allocations

- Allow within year fluctuations for Gypsy and Traveller pupils and adjust funding accordingly

by the Welsh Government.

- Consider a 3 year funding cycle to stabilise provision

If you could recommend to the Welsh Government one thing it could do to improve the educational attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic children, what would it be?

- Allow schools to disaggregate poor attendance and outcome data.

Do you have any other concerns about the amalgamation of the other previously separate grants into the Education Improvement Grant? If so, please provide details.

- No

It appears the grant allocations have been based on percentage cuts of previous funding allocations for 2014–15?

- Essentially pupil numbers have continued to rise whilst funding levels have been reduced.
- The needs of individual learners are not identified in an amalgamated grant system.
- Both the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant and The Gypsy and Traveller Education Grant should reflect the needs of pupils and schools in each Local Authority.

Finally, are there any other issues relating to the terms of reference that you would like to draw to the Committee's attention?

- The timing and process of budget plans and evaluations.
- Deadlines are often set during school holidays. Many of us remain on Teachers pay and conditions and/or work term time only.
- WG previous set stringent dates for the bidding and reporting processes for both grants; which was based on pupil data this is no longer the case.