

# THE PUPIL PREMIUM

## Next Steps

Sutton Trust and Education Endowment Foundation  
July 2015



Education  
Endowment  
Foundation



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## FOREWORD

Today's summit is an opportunity to take stock on the pupil premium and the use of evidence to improve results for disadvantaged pupils.

There is no doubt that the pupil premium has enabled schools – including many in areas not traditionally seen as facing significant disadvantage – to do more to improve the results of their less advantaged pupils. But equally, the data suggests that we still have much to do to ensure that those from poorer families do as well as their classmates. Some schools have closed that gap, but many still have a long way to go.

Research trials being run by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) are feeding into the Teaching and Learning Toolkit, initially published by the Sutton Trust and now hosted and developed by the EEF. The Toolkit, and the new EEF Families of Schools tool, are just two of the resources available to schools to help them discover what works and what is likely to be most cost-effective in improving the results of their pupil premium recipients. Our new polling published today suggests a big increase in the use of research by schools and strong use of our Toolkit. But there is still much more we need to do to embed research into schools, and for all teachers to see it as part of their armoury.

As the Government considers how the pupil premium is deployed over the next five years, it may also be time to consider whether rewards are built into the way it is distributed. Ofsted's expectations have concentrated minds and we have keenly supported the Pupil Premium Awards, which will this year go to 630 schools, but in the next phase of the premium it may be time to embed such rewards within the distribution of the premium itself.

I hope that today's summit – and this report – enables us to improve the pupil premium and its impact in the coming years. Giving disadvantaged young people the best start in life is a vital national endeavour that will pay dividends in providing a more skilled workforce and a stronger social fabric for the future.

**Sir Peter Lampl, Chairman, Sutton Trust and Education Endowment Foundation**  
**Chairman**  
**Sutton Trust**



## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continued support for the pupil premium, to improve attainment for disadvantaged pupils.**

The pupil premium should remain as a key lever to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Its success will depend on the degree to which it is spent effectively. This means schools working together more to maximise impact and build capacity, and a sustained effort by the Department for Education, Ofsted and others to make a genuine improvement in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, with appropriate accountability.

- **Continue paying the pupil premium on the basis of disadvantage, not prior attainment.**

It is important that the premium is paid for all disadvantaged pupils, without discrimination between low and high attainers. Doing otherwise - as some have suggested - would be bad for social mobility. It would also send perverse signals to successful schools. Recent Sutton Trust research has shown that disadvantaged but bright pupils fall behind at school, and it is important that schools use their premium funding where appropriate to provide stretching lessons for able disadvantaged pupils as well as helping low attainers to make good progress. This is also particularly important in improving later access to higher education.

- **A strong commitment to the promotion of rigorous evidence, particularly where it has been tested in randomised control trials.**

Evidence is a crucial tool which schools should use to inform their decision making and ensure that they identify the “best bets” for spending, but it must be acted upon. The EEF’s own qualitative research is consistent with this view. Even where money is spent on strategies which research shows have not always been effective, evidence can help schools identify steps which make success more likely. A good example is the way in which the EEF has evolved its evidence on the use of teaching assistants to show how they can make a difference with the right structures.<sup>1</sup> Ofsted should consider a schools’ use of evidence in their inspections and schools should be supported to evaluate approaches themselves. As we move towards a more school-led system, opportunities to build capacity on the effective use of evidence between schools and across trusts should be encouraged and recognised.

- **Improved teacher training and professional development so that all school leaders and classroom teachers understand how to use data and research effectively.**

Questions in the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Teacher Omnibus Survey for the Sutton Trust showed that only 4 per cent of teachers would spend the money first on improving feedback between teachers and pupils, a relatively inexpensive measure that could add eight months to pupils’ learning. Research shows that improving feedback can be a highly effective way to improve teacher development. And only 1 per cent would use peer-to-peer tutoring schemes, where older pupils typically help younger pupils to learn, an equally cost-effective measure to deliver substantial learning gains. Of course, any such

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<sup>1</sup> [educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/teaching-assistants-should-not-be-substitute-teachers-but-can-make-a-real-d/](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/teaching-assistants-should-not-be-substitute-teachers-but-can-make-a-real-d/)

measure requires effective implementation, but it is important that schools consider cost effectiveness where it can enable their premium funding to go further

Resources such as the Teaching and Learning Toolkit provide a good entry point to research, but more could be done through initial teacher training and professional development to equip teachers with the skills needed to engage with education research and to foster an understanding of the ways in which research can be used.

- **More effective systems to allow schools to identify pupils eligible for pupil premium funding.**

Schools are currently reliant on individual parents to apply for free school meals for their child, which means that schools only receive pupil premium funding for those pupils if their parents have been pro-active. The Government should consider introducing a data sharing system so that schools are automatically informed when pupils are entitled to free school meals and, therefore, pupil premium funding.

- **Extension of pupil premium awards so that schools that successfully and consistently improve results for all while narrowing the attainment gap are properly rewarded.**

Government should also consider linking some of the pupil premium systematically to school rewards, so that schools that successfully and consistently improve results for all while narrowing the attainment gap are properly recognised. The Pupil Premium Awards scheme is a welcome initiative, and it has rewarded over 600 schools this year, but consideration should be given to making this more systematic in future so successful schools are automatically rewarded. The opportunities to innovate that exist in a system with increasing autonomy increase the importance of doing this. In particular, schools should be rewarded for evaluating innovation robustly. In addition, where new school networks and structures exist these should be designed in such a way that increases the spread of knowledge to other schools, so that greater autonomy does not lead to increased isolation, and the pupil premium could help facilitate shared innovations that improve standards for disadvantaged pupils.

## INTRODUCTION: WHERE NEXT FOR THE PUPIL PREMIUM?

### The pupil premium

The pupil premium was introduced by the Coalition government in April 2011 to provide additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. The main difference between the premium and previous funding for disadvantaged pupils is that the premium is linked to individual pupils. Previous governments have provided extra resources for such pupils through extra funding to local authorities with high levels of poverty. Indeed, the Institute for Fiscal Studies has pointed out that pre-premium extra funding in the system attached to deprived pupils amounts to £2000 in primary schools and £3000 in secondary schools.<sup>2</sup> But this is the first grant paid to schools for each disadvantaged pupil, regardless of where the school is located.

The amount provided has grown over the years to total £1,320 per primary pupil in the current financial year and £935 for secondary pupils.<sup>3</sup> A total of £2.5 billion a year is now spent on the premium, over 6% of the £38.8 billion schools budget. The premium is paid for pupils who have been eligible for free school meals over the previous six years or who have been in care. Schools also receive £1,900 for pupils who have been in care but are now adopted or left care under certain guardianship orders. A separate grant of £300 is paid to schools to enable them to support the emotional and social well-being of service children.

More recently, an Early Years' Premium has been introduced for disadvantaged three and four-olds receiving free pre-school education.<sup>4</sup> It will complement the government-funded early education entitlement by providing nurseries, schools, and other providers with up to an additional £300 a year for each eligible child. The government has committed £50 million to fund the Early Years' Premium in 2015-16, and the government estimate that 170,000 will receive it (approximately 13% of all 3- and 4-year-olds).

The government has decided against ring-fencing the premium, relying instead on schools publishing details of spending on their websites, Ofsted inspections, league table measures and more recently, awards for successful schools. Individual schools have responded to the expectation from Ofsted that schools show clear policies for their pupil premium pupils, and Ofsted looks closely at a school's results for those pupils before an inspection. Failure to do enough for pupil premium pupils in otherwise high attaining schools with relatively few pupil premium pupils has led to some losing their outstanding status. More recently, the Government introduced Pupil Premium Awards, which were provided to over 600 schools this year, including prizes of £250,000 for national winners and £100,000 for regional winners, as well as hundreds of smaller awards.<sup>5</sup>

The Department for Education, Ofsted and headteachers' associations have also encouraged schools to use evidence of what works in raising attainment when spending their pupil premium allocations. A key source of this evidence is provided by the Teaching and Learning Toolkit, initially published by the Sutton Trust and Durham University, and since hosted and extended by the Education Endowment Foundation. The Toolkit includes

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ifs.org.uk/bns/bn121.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/early-years-pupil-premium-guide-for-local-authorities>

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

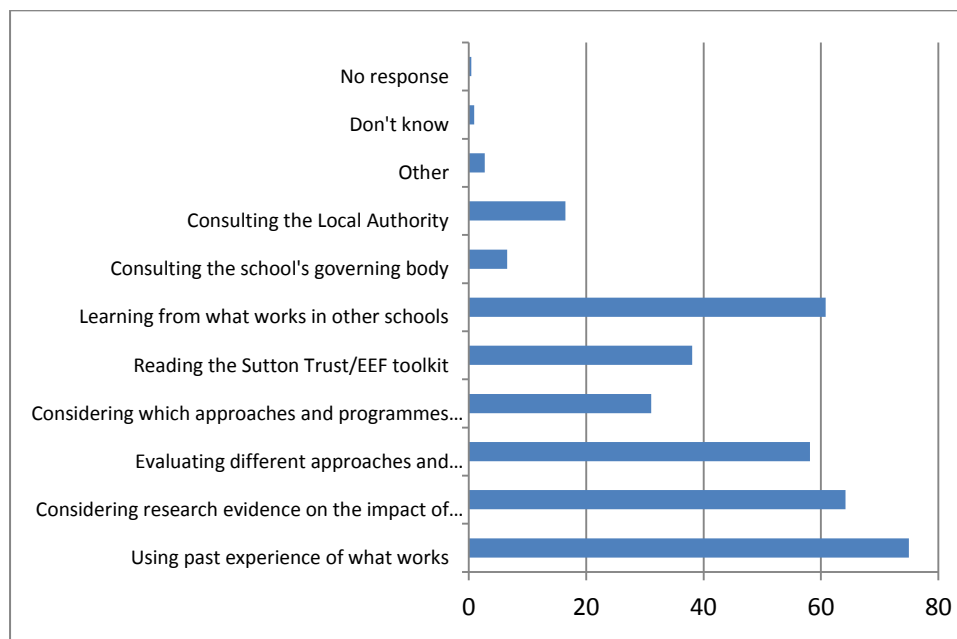
evidence on 34 categories, indicating whether or not they make measurable learning gains (expressed in months of learning value), the strength of available evidence and their relative cost.<sup>6</sup> The EEF's trials help update the Toolkit on a regular basis. It has been complemented by a new Families of Schools tool which allows schools to benchmark their performance against schools with a similar profile, including how well they compare in the attainment of their pupil premium pupils.<sup>7</sup>

### How are schools responding to the pupil premium?

For the last four years, the Sutton Trust has commissioned polling of teachers and school leaders on how they are using the pupil premium. Our polling using the NFER Teachers' Voice Omnibus has allowed us a unique insight into changing attitudes to the premium and how it is used.<sup>8</sup> This year, NFER surveyed a representative sample of 1,478 teachers in March 2015 in both primary and secondary schools for their Teacher Voice Omnibus survey.

Over the past four years there has been a growing willingness by senior leaders to say that they use research in deciding which approaches and programmes to use in improving pupil learning. Schools however also use their past experience of what works. This year, 64% of senior leaders said they would consider research evidence, compared with 52% in 2012. And many schools evaluate different approaches and programmes before deciding what to adopt (58% of senior leaders).

**Figure 1: How does your school decide which approaches and programmes to adopt to improve pupil learning? (Senior leaders)**



6 <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

7 <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/families-of-schools/>

8 The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) surveyed a representative sample of 1,478 teachers in February 2015 in both primary and secondary schools for their Teacher Voice Omnibus survey. <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/teacher-voice-omnibus-survey/>

Around half of secondary school leaders (48%) and a third (32%) of primary school leaders also say they make use of the Sutton Trust/EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit in making these decisions.

This year we asked some additional questions on the pupil premium to provide further insights for this summit. Schools are positive about the premium, with 76% of teachers saying that it allows their school to target resources to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils to a great extent or to some extent. However, enthusiasm is stronger among primary than secondary teachers, with 37% of primary teachers saying it helps to ‘a great extent’ compared with 23% of secondary teachers.

**Table 1: To what extent does the Pupil Premium Grant allow your school to: Target resources to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils?**

	All	Primary	Secondary
	%	%	%
To a great extent	30	37	23
To some extent	46	44	48
To a little extent	10	8	13
Not at all	2	1	2
Don't know	11	9	14
No response	0	1	
N =	1478	761	717

When asked to what extent the pupil premium allows their school to raise attainment for pupils that are falling behind, primary teachers were again more enthusiastic than secondary teachers, but a clear majority of both said it did so to a great extent or some extent.

**Table 2: To what extent does the Pupil Premium Grant allow your school to: Target resources to raise attainment for those pupils that are falling behind?**

	All	Primary	Secondary
	%	%	%
To a great extent	21	26	16
To some extent	49	49	49
To a little extent	13	12	15
Not at all	3	2	4
Don't know	12	9	16
No response	1	1	1
N =	1478	761	717

However, many schools see the premium as supporting improved attainment for all pupils, with 55% of primary and 40% of secondary teachers saying that it ‘target[s] resources to raise attainment for all pupils to a great or some extent.’



**Table 3: To what extent does the Pupil Premium Grant allow your school to: Target resources to raise attainment for all pupils?**

	All	Primary	Secondary
	%	%	%
To a great extent	10	14	7
To some extent	37	41	33
To a little extent	26	24	29
Not at all	11	9	13
Don't know	14	11	17
No response	1	1	1
<b>N =</b>	<b>1478</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>717</b>

And a significant number of schools also feel that the premium is plugging funding gaps left by reductions in the schools budget caused by tighter national spending. 50% of primary teachers and 44% of secondary teachers say that the premium has enabled them to continue activities that would not otherwise happen due to funding pressures in other areas of the schools budget.

**Table 4: To what extent does the Pupil Premium Grant allow your school to: Continue activities that would not otherwise happen due to funding pressures in other areas of the school budget?**

	All	Primary	Secondary
	%	%	%
To a great extent	17	20	13
To some extent	30	30	31
To a little extent	19	20	19
Not at all	14	15	14
Don't know	18	14	23
No response	1	1	1
<b>N =</b>	<b>1478</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>717</b>

### How well is the pupil premium being used?

Each year, we have asked teachers how the pupil premium is being spent in their schools. A clear favourite continues to be early intervention schemes, an answer given by 31% of schools and almost equally popular in primary and secondary schools. One-to-one tuition is chosen by one in six schools. A significant minority of schools use the funding to employ extra teachers or teaching assistants, but this is more common in primary than secondary schools. However, relatively few schools choose some of the best low cost proven approaches, according to the Sutton Trust/EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit, with only 4% citing improve feedback between teachers and pupils and 1% saying they use peer-to-peer tutoring.

**Table 5: With the money received through the Pupil Premium, what is the main priority for extra spending at your school in 2014/2015?**

	All	Primary	Secondary
	%	%	%
Reducing class sizes	3	3	3
Additional teaching assistants	10	14	5
Additional teachers	9	13	5
More one-to-one tuition	16	15	17
Peer-to-peer tutoring schemes for pupils	1	0	1
Improving feedback between teachers and pupils / providing more feedback that is effective	4	4	5
Early intervention schemes	31	32	30
Extending the breadth of the curriculum	2	3	1
Improving the classroom or school environment	1	1	1
Offsetting budget cuts elsewhere	2	1	3
Other	4	3	5
Don't know	17	11	22
None	0	0	0
No response	0		0
<b>N =</b>	<b>1478</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>717</b>

There have been changes over time in the responses teachers give to this question. There has been a decline in the number of teachers saying class size is a priority and, encouragingly, a drop in the proportion saying they 'don't know' (17% now compared to 28% in 2012). There has been a significant increase in the number of schools using the funding for early intervention schemes (up from 16% to 31%). There have also been small increases in the number of teachers saying premium funding goes towards improving feedback and one-to-one tuition.

**Table 6: With the money received through the Pupil Premium, what is the main priority for extra spending at your school in 2014/2015 and 2011/12?**

All teachers	2015	2012
Reducing class sizes	3	15
Additional teaching assistants	10	8
Additional teachers	9	5
More one-to-one tuition	16	10
Peer-to-peer tutoring schemes for pupils	1	0
Improving feedback between teachers and pupils / providing more feedback that is effective	4	2
Early intervention schemes	31	16
Extending the breadth of the curriculum	2	3
Improving the classroom or school environment	1	5
Offsetting budget cuts elsewhere	2	8
Other	4	1
Don't know	17	28
None	0	1
<b>N =</b>	<b>1478</b>	<b>1676</b>

### What are the results?

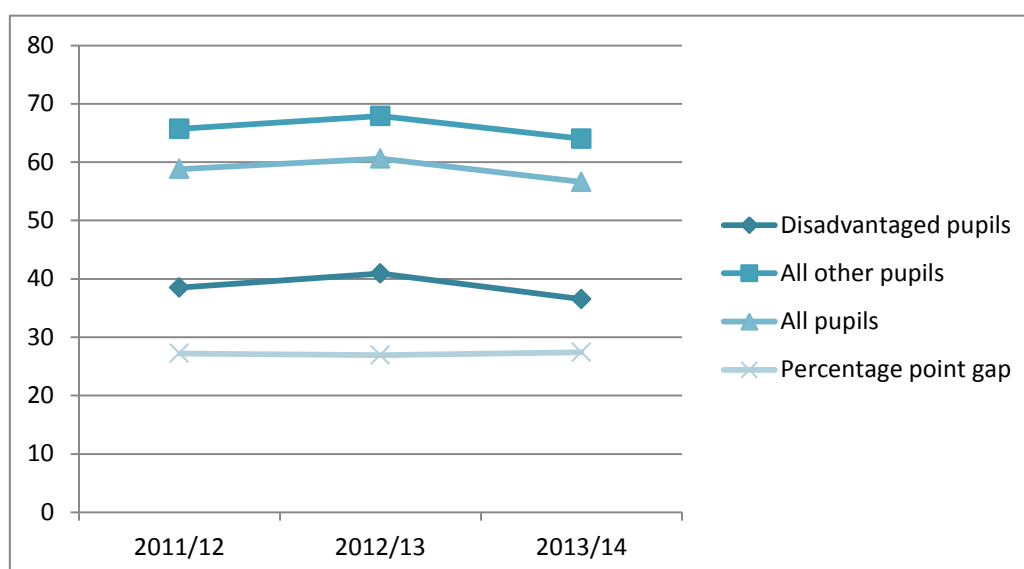
It may be too early to draw definitive conclusions on the effectiveness of the pupil premium, and there are challenges comparing data over time due to changes in how performance measures are calculated. But in the period when it has been available, there has been a narrowing of the gap in primary schools but as measured on the traditional five good GCSE measure and attainment at age 19, the gap has not narrowed significantly in secondary schools.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The Department for Education notes that "In 2014 the proportion of pupils in both groups achieving this measure was lower than the two preceding years. This was affected by changes to how results are counted in performance measures, meaning

**Table 7: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A\*-C including GCSE English & mathematics<sup>10</sup>**

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
<b>Disadvantaged pupils</b>	38.5	40.9	36.5
<b>All other pupils</b>	65.7	67.9	64
<b>All pupils</b>	58.8	60.6	56.6
<b>Percentage point gap</b>	27.2	26.9	27.4

**Figure 2: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A\*-C including GCSE English & mathematics**



However, as Rebecca Allen discusses in her essay in this report, the government is developing a different way of measuring the impact on secondary schools which is closer to the measures likely to be used in the future to assess GCSE performance – the *Disadvantaged Pupils Attainment Gap Index* - based on a 'mean rank difference'. The GCSE Index will be calculated by ranking all candidates on their English and Maths scores, and then taking an average of these. They will then compare the average rank between pupils eligible for free school meals, and those not. This value is then 're-scaled' to a base of ten. Using this measure, the government calculates that the gap has narrowed by almost four per cent between 2012 and 2014.

Nevertheless, the evidence is that while the impact has been significant in individual schools, progress remains slow at a national level. With a spending review to come later in 2015, there is likely to be pressure on the premium to deliver more.

As it does so, there are a number of issues that we believe it needs to consider:

some qualifications no longer counted as GCSE equivalents, and only pupils' first entries in English Baccalaureate subjects were counted."

<sup>10</sup> Department for Education, Measuring disadvantaged pupils' attainment gaps over time (updated), January 2015

- how well evidence is used to inform spending;
- whether to continue providing the premium on the basis of FSM ever rather than other measures of disadvantage;
- whether there should be more systematic rewards built in than at present for schools that successfully improve results for disadvantaged pupils;
- how the needs of both low attainers and able pupils are recognised in the pupil premium;
- whether it is right to continue with a lower premium in secondary schools.

Getting these answers right can help ensure that that the pupil premium delivers better results for disadvantaged pupils in the coming years, while ensuring that it provides value for money to the government.

## FROM BRIGHT SPOTS TO A BRIGHT SYSTEM

**SIR KEVAN COLLINS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION**

The introduction of the pupil premium allowed us to get serious about addressing the scandal of poor outcomes for too many disadvantaged children.

Schools in every part of the country are leading the way and tackling the attainment gap head-on, improving results for their most disadvantaged pupils. But one of the biggest challenges we face is inconsistency: the variation between similar schools, serving all types of communities, is wide.

It's essential that we strive for a system which is reliable: where every child, of any background, can fulfil their potential and make the most of their talents.

Moving from bright spots to a system that delivers for all will be determined in a large part by the way we deal with autonomy, the extension of which has been one of the biggest changes in England since the 1980s. A head teacher in an English school today has a large degree of freedom over what is taught, how it is taught and how resources are allocated.

Understanding autonomy matters because it is a double-edged sword. It can drive innovation and enable schools to respond to the precise needs of its students and their families. It is understandably popular with school leaders, parents and policy-makers alike. But the dividing line between an autonomous school and an isolated one can be fine. Innovation only works at a system level if there is a mechanism to capture and share the knowledge that is generated.

At the Education Endowment Foundation, we believe that the key to unlocking autonomy's potential is evidence. If school leaders are able to use evidence to inform school improvement then autonomy can help achieve the goal of consistent excellence. Without evidence, the potential benefits of a school-led system may be lost.

The importance of evidence is greater today than ever before. In the last parliament, school funding was protected from wider public spending cuts. The future is undoubtedly going to get tougher and schools will no longer be able to put off difficult decisions. Without evidence, they will be even more challenging.

### **Evidence in practice**

But what does using evidence mean in practice?

First, we should recognise that autonomy does not require every school to start with a blank sheet of paper. To create a successful school-led system we must support schools to spread the net wide and access to high-quality information about what others have tried in the past and what is going on today in other parts of the country.

When the EEF launched four years ago, few would have predicted there would be such an appetite within the system for evidence: both producing and consuming it. As testament to this, we now work with one in five of the country's schools to trial and evaluate cost-effective methods for raising the attainment of the most disadvantaged pupils. Since 2011 and

through 100 projects, we've helped more than 620,000 pupils in over 4,900 schools across England.

Our Teaching and Learning Toolkit developed in partnership with the Sutton Trust and Durham University, is a live resource that synthesises international evidence and the latest findings from EEF projects. The Toolkit is now used by half of all school leaders. But there are still too many schools disregarding the knowledge gained through the efforts of their peers. This is troubling, especially for schools with persistent attainment gaps.

The second step towards consistency is evaluation. Improving the status quo is difficult, and no approach will work in every classroom, which is why it is worth investing time and energy checking whether a new idea does create genuine improvement.

One of the most promising projects we've funded was an initiative delivered by the Calderdale Effectiveness Partnership that cost just over £50 per pupil. Designed to use self-regulation to improve writing skills, the project provided children with memorable experiences such as a trip to zoo, and gave them a structured approach to writing about it. Pupils made, on average, an additional nine months' progress; the impact on free school meals pupils was even greater, at 18 months.

To assess its impact as rigorously as possible, the evaluation was set up as a randomised controlled trial led by an independent evaluation team. We're now testing the project's effectiveness on a larger scale, working with 7,200 pupils in Leeds and Lincolnshire, and are hugely excited by its potential.

In addition to assessing an approach's impact on learning quantitatively, it's also important to try and work out the "why" and "how" questions that can be overlooked. In the case of Calderdale, it's unlikely the lions and tigers themselves that were the "active ingredients" that led to impact. Rather, the approach was about engaging pupils and teaching them how to plan, structure and self-evaluate accounts of their visit.

The final and most difficult step towards consistent excellence is making change stick. A school-led system requires courage and heads need both the nerve to try something new the confidence to resist the pressure to tinker with what is already working well. When an innovation appears to succeed it is a moment for celebration. But it is only when it is evaluated, embedded and reliably repeated that it truly makes a difference.

### **Impact on a larger scale**

Finding effective ways to achieve impact on a larger scale is one of the obstacles we face in the drive to raise standards. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, we do need better systems in place for sharing and collaborating.

The EEF's "Families of Schools" database also aims to encourage schools to share their successes widely. Launched earlier this year, the tool groups similar schools together on factors including prior attainment, percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and the number of children who speak English as an additional language. For the first time, it allows schools to understand the size and nature of their attainment gap in relation to other similar institutions and to learn from the best-performing schools in their family.

To make a difference in the classroom, the details matter. To understand and implement something new requires time, professional development and, often, money. But we know that without paying attention to the details the effects seen in the early stages of an innovation are rarely replicated.

The history of education is strewn with plausible sounding ideas that turned out to be red herrings, or that worked wonders for a term before falling by the wayside. But putting in effort to evaluate and embed change is worth the effort. There is a great prize on offer: a consistent and school-led system providing better outcomes for our children.



## THE TOOLKIT FOUR YEARS ON: LESSONS FOR SPENDING THE PUPIL PREMIUM

DR LEE ELLIOT MAJOR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SUTTON TRUST  
PROFESSOR STEVE HIGGINS, DURHAM UNIVERSITY

### **It's the way you spend it**

'It's not what you spend, it's the way that you spend it... that's what gets results'. This was one of the central messages that underpinned our first toolkit for schools, launched four years ago. The sentiments are even more pertinent today as the debate intensifies on how to deploy the annual £2.5 billion of pupil premium funds aimed at improving the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Earlier this year the latest national test results brought once again the humbling news that despite our best efforts the stark gap between the country's education haves and have-nots persists.

In many ways, the arguments over the government's flagship policy for social mobility echo those aired during the early days of the last parliament. Yet there is one striking difference: teachers and policy-makers are now talking about evidence. References to research on what has worked in the classroom now abound in a way that is unrecognisable to the discussions last time round. At the same time, schools are bracing themselves for a period of unprecedented upheaval and uncertainty as the landscape for assessment, accountability and attainment all undergo major reform yet again, while budgets get squeezed.

### **The birth and success of the toolkit**

Five years ago a perfect storm of conditions enabled the toolkit to thrive. We produced the original 20-page *Pupil Premium Toolkit* as the Sutton Trust's response to the then coalition government's newly unveiled pupil premium. Our argument was simple: How the billions of pounds would actually be spent by schools would be critical to its success. Our concern was that the government's suggested priorities for the funding (reducing class sizes for example) were not grounded in robust evidence.

This *Which*-style guide summarised the world's education evidence about interventions offering teachers best bets of what has worked more effectively in schools together with the relative costs of each approach. This enabled schools to decide how to allocate funding. Unlike other research summaries, the aim was to create a genuinely accessible guide for teachers. We estimated the extra months gain in learning for pupils that approaches might lead to (if delivered well). Its launch in 2011 came at a time when schools in England were being plunged into a 'high autonomy high accountability' regime. The Government was reluctant to 'tell' schools how to spend the pupil premium money; the toolkit was the only independent guidance available.

But it wasn't until the Education Endowment Foundation was created that the 'Teaching and Learning Toolkit' was developed into the interactive website you see today, and which attracts over 20,000 hits each month. It has flourished under the brilliant 'toolkit team' at the EEF. There are now 34 categories with a wealth of material for teachers. The guide has been extended to the early years summarising evidence on the best bets for 3 and 4 year old children in early years settings. The EEF has commissioned over 100 trials to produce

evidence from English schools to feed into the toolkit – and has put evidence at the heart of our education debates.

Referred to by Ofsted as part of its efforts to scrutinise how the pupil premium was being used in schools, it is perhaps not surprising that the toolkit is now referenced on many schools' websites. A study published by the Department for Education found that over half (52%) of secondary schools and a third (33%) of primary schools had used the toolkit, echoing the findings of the NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus survey for the Sutton Trust described at the beginning of this report. We have even found that the toolkit approach has attracted interest from beyond the UK, and in 2015 an Australian version was launched.

### **Three enduring questions**

For all these achievements, the same tensions we wrestled with when first producing the toolkit are still apparent four years on. They point to at least three enduring questions about how evidence can be used most effectively to maximise the impact of the premium. First, how do we communicate research findings in a simple accessible way without losing the nuances of the evidence? Second, how do we encourage teachers to embrace evidence without slipping into a compliance culture where being seen to do the right thing is more important than the real impact? Third, how do we ensure evidence-based practice helps disadvantaged children in particular?

Key to the toolkit's success was its simplicity. We were at pains to convert the complex findings of thousands of academic reviews into succinct headlines to make it easily digestible for teachers. This included a measure of average impact, cost and robustness of evidence for each teaching approach. Crucially, we translated average effect size into the number of extra months' progress a child would experience over a school year.

The price for this was some rather worrying misinterpretation of the research. One of the most noteworthy findings was that teaching assistants, on average, didn't have any measurable impact on pupils' progress. Some school heads took this finding at face value prompting them to question whether they should employ teaching assistants at all. In fact, a more thorough reading of the toolkit evidence pointed to the need for better deployment, preparation and management of the assistants.

Another more recent example concerns effective feedback which the toolkit found to be one of the best bets to improve pupil outcomes. An increased focus on feedback among school inspectors, partly prompted by this finding, however has led to an unhelpfully narrow focus on marking in schools, which is just one element of effective feedback.

So, one enduring lesson is to be vigilant against the unintended consequences of research headlines. Moreover, there is now a growing number of teachers who want to explore the findings in much finer detail and go below the toolkit's headlines. Teachers might now be categorised in three groups: evidence-seekers, compliance chasers and the disengaged. The challenge is to cater to all of them while recognising that, like any tool, our resource will be most useful when in the hands of professionals.

Our hope was that the toolkit would help to counterbalance the increasingly strong accountability measures for schools, which now look likely to intensify further. Empowering teachers to improve their practice without implementing top-down demands is a delicate

balancing act. We may now need to reconsider how to ensure schools use their pupil premium effectively and avoid shallow compliance. There is a concern that schools have used the toolkit to justify pupil premium spending retrospectively, not really as part of their decision making process at all.

Finally, but most importantly, the real measure of success must be whether the toolkit has helped to improve the attainment of our most disadvantaged children. This of course is the driving mission for the work of the EEF. But a growing danger, made ever more real in this time of tightened budgets, is that pupil premium money may be directed towards other priorities and away from children and young people who are educationally disadvantaged in our society. All the debates about evidence will be academic if they receive no spending at all.

## WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHETHER, WHERE AND WHY THE PUPIL PREMIUM GAP IS CLOSING?

**DR REBECCA ALLEN, DIRECTOR, EDUCATION DATALAB**

The coalition government of 2010-2015 invested enormous amounts of money and political capital in trying to close the attainment gap between children from low-income families, and everyone else. Schools are now required by Ofsted to monitor how far they are succeeding in closing their own gap. We want to know whether they are making progress towards this goal at a national level. However, measuring national and school pupil premium gaps is fraught with difficulties. It certainly needs to be done, but done with great care.

### **The gap is closing on some measures and not on others**

At first glance, things do not seem to be getting much better: the headline gap between the proportion of pupils gaining five good GCSEs, including English and maths, for non-pupil premium and pupil premium children is barely closing (it was 26.4 and 26.2 percentage points in 2011 and 2014, respectively). However, this is a relatively poor measure for monitoring the gap since it ignores many improvements.

It is a threshold measure only capable of changing when a student successfully achieves a C grade instead of a D grade, and not if they achieve an E rather than F or indeed an A rather than a B grade. For many children, it is their grade in English or maths that prevents them achieving five or more A\*-C, including English and maths. This means the school's performance in this threshold measure hangs on the performance of one maths and one English teacher, each teaching the C-D borderline ability set for their subject. Since some Pupil Premium children are very low attaining, it is very hard for a school to bring large numbers over the five or more A\*-C threshold, even if they make very substantial improvements to teaching.

By contrast, on new accountability measures the gap is closing so fast that, if current trends continue, it will be zero by 2032! From 2016 onwards, school performance will be judged on pupil grades across eight subjects: English and maths, three subjects from science, computer science, history, geography and languages, plus any other three subjects. On this Attainment 8 measure, the gap has been narrowing fairly consistently each year. This gap has been closing particularly rapidly for children achieving a Level 4B or better in Key Stage Two tests at age 11.<sup>11</sup>

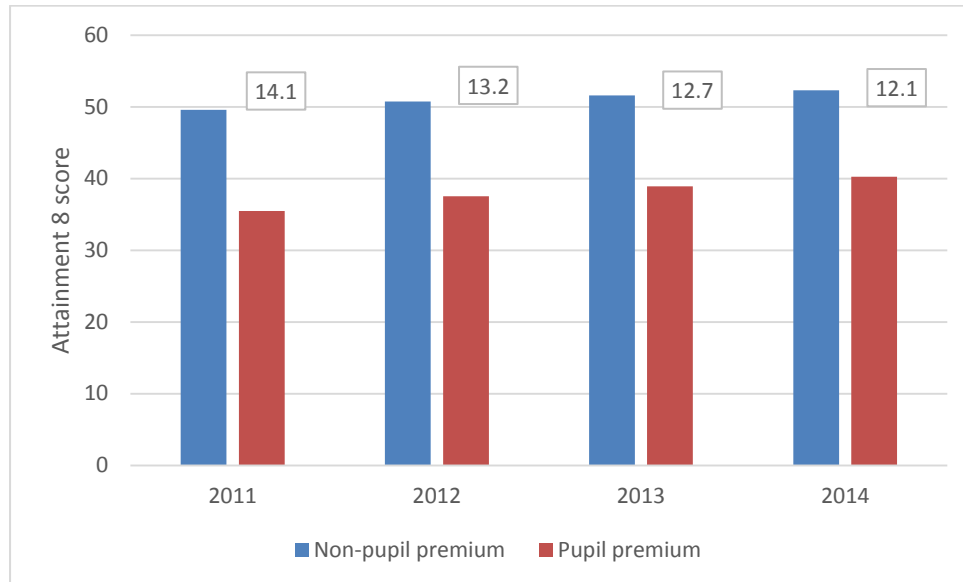
Measuring the size of the pupil premium gap on this measure is more desirable because the grades of all pupils across a wide range of subjects contribute to Attainment 8 success, so it successfully identifies improvements even where they are happening for those pupils at the bottom - or top - of the attainment distribution. However, it is important to understand that Attainment 8 improves because grades improve and because subject entry mix has become better aligned with the more traditional academic subjects listed above. This change in subject entry mix is more pronounced for pupil premium children simply because this group were less likely to be following this type of curriculum in the past. The gap in the number of

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<sup>11</sup> While level 4 is the 'expected standard' at Key Stage 2, Level 4B is a better predictor of the likelihood of achieving five good GCSEs.

Attainment 8 qualifying subjects has narrowed from 1.13 subjects in 2011 to 0.81 subjects in 2014. In fact, the pupil premium gap in entry patterns has now almost closed entirely for pupils with very high prior attainment.

**Figure 3: The Attainment 8 pupil premium gap has been steadily falling**



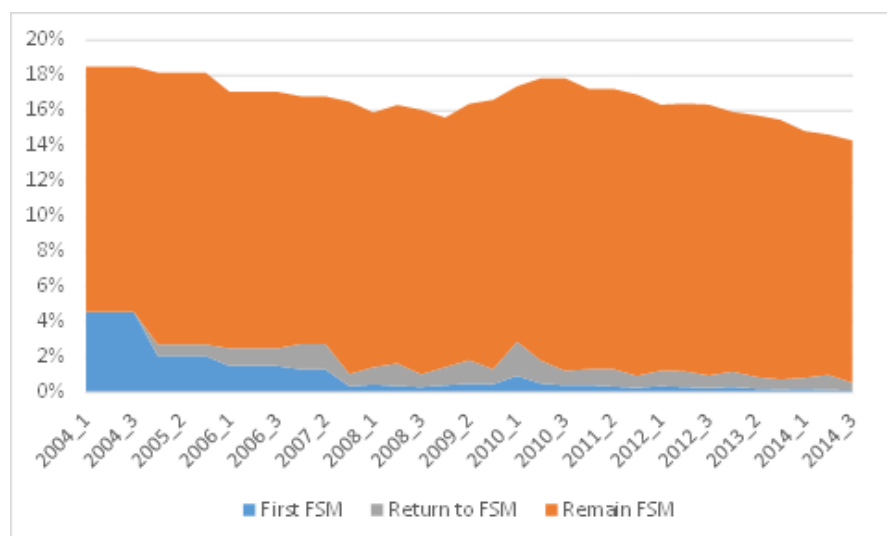
### **Eligibility for free school meals changes considerably by age and over time**

Ideally we would want to assess the impact of the pupil premium on attainment gaps using a stable definition of educational disadvantage but eligibility for free school meals is far from stable. It is determined at any point in time by parental income and entitlement to out-of-work benefits. The list of eligible benefits grew considerably after 2001 and then shrunk under welfare reforms from 2011 onwards.

This bulging and then shrinking entitlement to benefits brings pupils into and out of the free school meals category that are likely to have quite different characteristics to those who have remained eligible under all definitions of the past decade. Furthermore, economic recessions bring a further group into the eligibility category who may be very different to those persistently not in work.

We see these patterns in the data when we track a single cohort born in 1997/8 from their time in reception through to age 16. A large number - 34% - experienced at least one spell of FSM recorded in the census.

**Figure 4: Eligibility for free school meals rises in recessions, falls with benefit entitlement tightening and falls as children get older**



The impact of the recession on eligibility is very visible in the data on the chart. More significantly, FSM eligibility falls as children get older simply because their family's benefits entitlement declines and parents are better able to access work with older children in the house. This has significant implications for how we monitor the gap at different stages of education. If those who remain on free school meals in secondary schools are from the families who are most disconnected with the labour market, we may find secondary school pupil premium gaps are largest here even with significant earlier interventions to modify the gap.

**Concentrate on better results for pupil premium children, rather than narrowing the gap**

Free school meals children are clearly different from one another, but they vary far less than the group who are not eligible for free school meals, since this group includes both those with bankers and cleaners as parents. And it is important to note that many non-FSM pupils come from lower income households than FSM pupils. (Hobbs and Vignoles<sup>12</sup> estimate that only around one-quarter to one-half of FSM pupils are in the lowest income households in 2004/5.) This is principally because the very act of receiving means-tested benefits and tax credits pushes children eligible for FSM up the household income distribution.

It is the diverse nature of the non-FSM pupils across England that means that is more difficult than we might think to compare pupil premium gaps across schools. A school may substantially narrow the gap by working hard to improve the attainment of their most deprived children, or through the accident of the characteristics of their ineligible children. Many schools have always had pupil premium gaps close to zero because their non-claiming pupils are no different in their social or educational background to their pupil premium children.

<sup>12</sup> Hobbs, G. and Vignoles, A. (2010) Is children's free school meal 'eligibility' a good proxy for family income? *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(4).

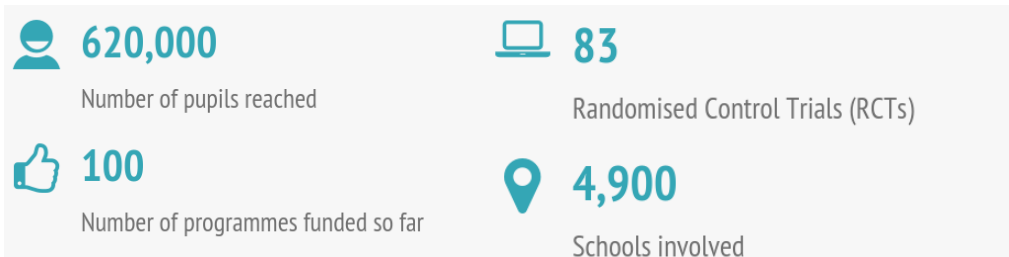
So, although it is gaps in achievement that contribute to social class inequalities and should be the national benchmark to assessing policy success, it is better for schools to concentrate their focus on the attainment of their FSM pupils rather than the size of their own pupil premium gap. The size of pupil premium gaps across schools can be compared across schools with similar demographic profiles, as is used in the Education Endowment Foundation's Families of Schools tool.

What matters to children from low-income families is that a school enables them to achieve a qualification to get on in life. If a low-income student gets a poor education from a school, it is little consolation or use for them to learn that the school served the higher income students equally poorly (the school's 'gap' was small).

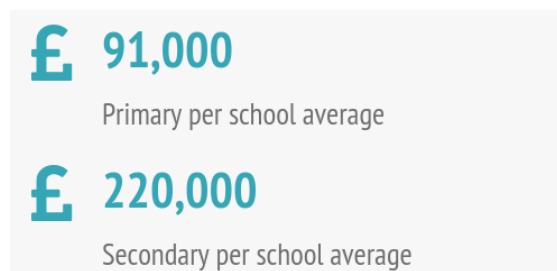
As it turns out, great schools tend to be great schools for all children in the school – the statistical correlation between who does well for FSM children and who does well for non-FSM children is very high. Moreover, schools can make a difference to the life chances of FSM children – there are huge differences in attainment for these children across schools, far larger than there are for children from wealthy backgrounds who do pretty well in all schools.

## PUPIL PREMIUM – FAST FACTS

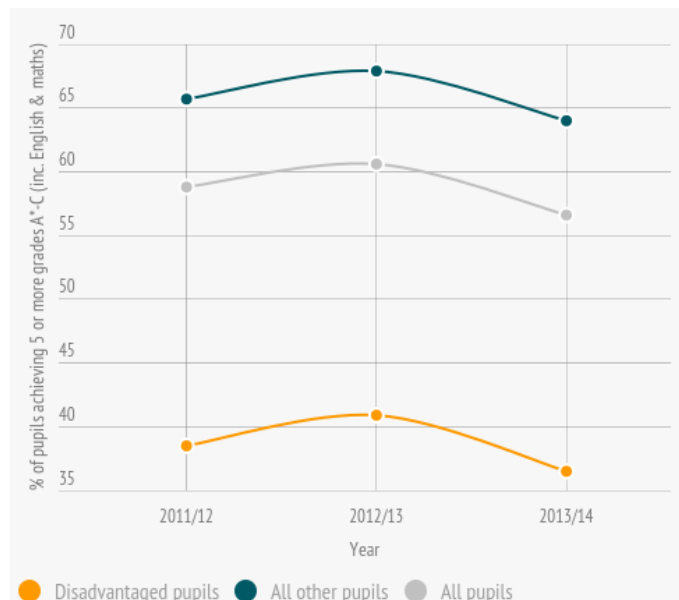
### EEF RESEARCH STATISTICS



### AVERAGE PUPIL PREMIUM ALLOCATION<sup>13</sup>



### THE ATTAINMENT GAP BY PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS ACHIEVING 5 OR MORE GRADES A\*-C INCLUDING GCSE ENGLISH & MATHEMATICS<sup>15</sup>

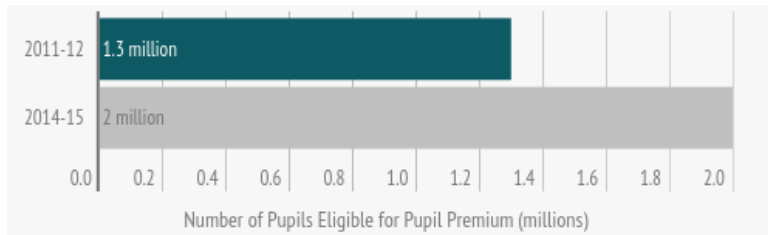
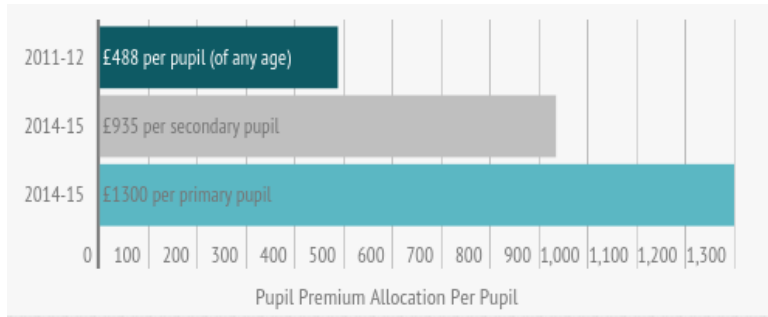


<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-2014-to-2015-final-allocations>

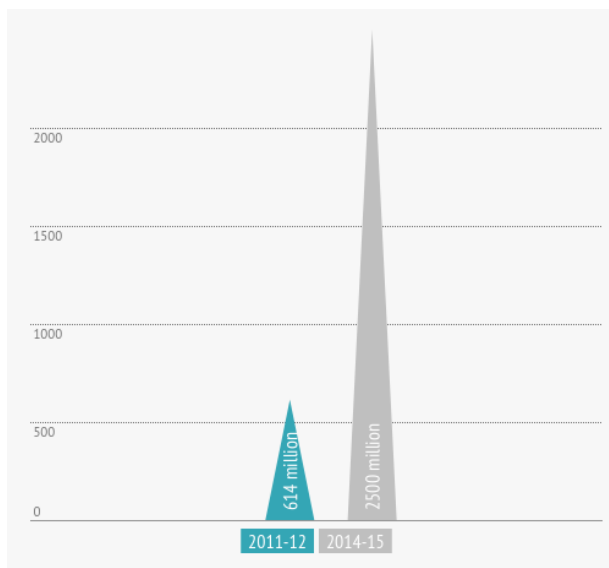
<sup>15</sup> In 2014 the proportion of pupils in both groups achieving this measure was lower than the two preceding years. This was affected by changes to how results are counted in performance measures, meaning some qualifications no longer counted as GCSE equivalents, and only pupils' first entries in English Baccalaureate subjects were counted. Source: DfE analysis



## NUMBER OF PUPIL PREMIUM ELIGIBLE PUPILS<sup>16</sup>



## AMOUNT SPENT ON PUPIL PREMIUM TO DATE<sup>17</sup>



## ABOUT THE SUTTON TRUST AND EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION



### THE SUTTON TRUST

The Sutton Trust, a UK-based foundation set up by Sir Peter Lampl in 1997, is dedicated to improving social mobility through education. The Trust has funded and evaluated programmes that have helped hundreds of thousands of young people from low and middle income homes across all ages. It has published over 150 research studies that have had a profound impact on national education policy in Britain and received prominent coverage in the national news media.

As well as being a think tank, the Sutton Trust is a 'do-tank'. The Trust identifies and develops programmes to help non-privileged children, undertakes independent and robust evaluations, and scales up successful programmes, often on a national scale, attracting state funding. The Trust's work is highly cost-effective. An independent study by the Boston Consulting Group found that, on average, the Trust's programmes generate a return to beneficiaries of £15 for every pound invested, a figure that does not include the wider benefits to society.

[www.suttontrust.com](http://www.suttontrust.com)



## **THE EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION**

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an independent grant-making charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement, ensuring that children from all backgrounds can fulfil their potential and make the most of their talents.

We aim to raise the attainment of children facing disadvantage by:

- Identifying and funding promising educational innovations that address the needs of disadvantaged children in primary and secondary schools in England;
- Evaluating these innovations to extend and secure the evidence on what works and can be made to work at scale;
- Encouraging schools, government, charities, and others to apply evidence and adopt innovations found to be effective.

We share evidence by providing independent and accessible information through the Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit, summarising educational research from the UK and around the world. This Toolkit provides guidance for teachers and schools on how best to use their resources to improve the attainment of pupils. All EEF-funded projects are independently and rigorously evaluated and the results will be integrated into our Toolkit.

[www.educationendowmentfoundation.com](http://www.educationendowmentfoundation.com)

## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

### Sir Peter Lampl



Sir Peter is acknowledged to be the UK's leading educational philanthropist. He founded the Sutton Trust in 1997 to improve social mobility through education and remains the Trust's chairman.

He is also chairman of the Education Endowment Foundation set up in 2011 by the Sutton Trust with support from Impetus Trust funded by an endowment of £135 million from the Government to improve the performance of the poorest children in the worst performing schools.

Before establishing the Sutton Trust, Peter was the founder and chairman of the Sutton Company, a Private Equity firm with offices in New York, London and Munich.

### Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP



The Rt Hon Nicky Morgan was appointed Education Secretary and Minister for Women and Equalities on 15 July 2014. She has been Conservative MP for Loughborough since 2010.

Nicky has served as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Rt Hon David Willetts MP, Cabinet Minister at the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, and before that was a member of the BIS Select Committee. She served as an

Assistant Whip in the coalition government, until her appointment as Economic Secretary to the Treasury on 7 October 2013. She was appointed as Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Minister for Women on 9 April 2014.

### David Hall



David is a trustee of the Education Endowment Foundation and a governor of Swanlea School in Tower Hamlets. He is a member of the boards of Vestra wealth managers and of Ricardo plc, and an advisory director of Campbell Lutyens. David was a member of the executive committee of the Boston Consulting Group and chairman of BCG's ten worldwide practice groups. He was the founder-leader of the financial services practice of BCG. David was chairman of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) from 2006 to 2012 and is a former non-executive director of C. Hoare & Co. He was awarded CBE for services to financial services, for his chairmanship of the FSCS.

### Brian Lightman



Brian Lightman became General Secretary of ASCL on 1 September 2010. He served as president of the association in 2007-08.

Brian was educated at Westminster City School and the University of Southampton where he graduated with a BA (Hons) in German. He also has an MA in Education from the Open University. He taught modern foreign languages for 16 years in three comprehensive schools in the South East of England before becoming headteacher of Llantwit Major School in 1995 and then headteacher of St Cyres School, a large, mixed 11-18

comprehensive in Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan, from 1999-2010. Brian is acknowledged as an authority on the English and Welsh education systems. Brian is a Patron of the National Citizen Service and serves on the boards of the Careers and Enterprise company and the PiXLEdge charity.

### **Dame Sharon Hollows**



Charter Academy has standards that are amongst the highest in the country, with 83% of students achieving the gold standard of 5 A\* - Cs including English and maths in 2014. This made Charter the most improved secondary school in the country. Behaviour is excellent and the academy is oversubscribed.

Charter doesn't serve an affluent community. The catchment area is one of the poorest in the country. 62% of the students receive pupil premium. In 2009 when the Academy converted, only 23 students were expected to start year 7.

In 2015 Charter was awarded the National Pupil Premium Award in recognition of their outstanding provision for disadvantaged students. Dame Sharon previously led the most improved primary school in the country.

### **Russell Hobby**



Russell Hobby was born and raised in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, attending St Nicholas CE Primary and John Mason Secondary School. He studied philosophy, politics and economics at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

In 1998, he joined the management consultancy Hay Group. Within a year of joining, Russell was working on education projects, including research into teacher effectiveness for the then DfES. This was the start of his strong association with issues of leadership and management in schools. In 2000, he helped to set up Transforming Learning – a 'dot com' business unit dedicated to collecting pupil feedback on classroom climate via the internet. Transforming Learning was used in over 2000 schools. In 2003 he founded Hay Group's education practice, leading a team of consultants working directly with leadership teams in hundreds of schools of every phase, size and location, as well as government agencies.

Taking up the post as General Secretary of the NAHT, in September 2010, has given him the opportunity to campaign directly for the conditions that enable people to be great leaders in our schools.

### **Clare de Sausmarez**



Clare is Headteacher at the Federation of Belle Vue Infant and Newport Junior Schools in Hampshire. Earlier in 2015 her school won a Pupil Premium Award in the Infant and Key Stage 3 category. The school introduced effective strategies to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, resulting in sustained improvement in raising their attainment. In particular, the school invested in one-to-one activities as well as a summer club where small groups received extra support in reading, writing and maths. Parents of pupil premium pupils were invited into the school to discuss their child's education and learning, and parent play sessions have also engaged fathers, who were previously hard to reach. Clare began her teaching career in Inner London. She has been teaching for 27 years and has been a

Headteacher for 15 years.

### **Sir John Dunford**



John is the government's National Pupil Premium Champion, an independent role in which he works part-time with schools and local authorities on the effective use of pupil premium funding to raise the educational achievement of disadvantaged pupils, reporting back to the Department for Education on issues raised by school leaders and teachers. John is chair of Whole Education and the charity Worldwide Volunteering. He carries out educational consultancy for a range of organisations and is a governor of St Andrew's CofE Primary School in his home village in Leicestershire.

### **Sir Michael Wilshaw**



Sir Michael was appointed Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills on 1 January 2012.

Prior to joining Ofsted, Sir Michael had a distinguished career as a teacher for 43 years, 26 of these as a headteacher in London secondary schools, and most recently as Executive Principal at Mossbourne Community Academy in Hackney. In addition to leading Mossbourne Community Academy, Sir Michael was Director of Education for ARK, a charitable education trust running a number of academies across England.

### **Sir Kevan Collins**



Kevan has worked in public service for over twenty-five years and became the first EEF Chief Executive in October 2011, having previously been Chief Executive in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Prior to this role he led a distinguished career in education – starting off as a primary school teacher, leading the Primary Literacy Strategy as National Director, and then serving as Director of Children's Services at Tower Hamlets. Kevan also gained international experience working in Mozambique and supporting the development of a national literacy initiative in the USA. He completed his doctorate focusing on literacy development at Leeds University in 2005.

### **Lee Elliot Major**



Lee is Chief Executive of the Trust and leads on our development work. He oversaw the trust's research work from 2006-2012.

He is a trustee of the Education Endowment Foundation, and chairs its evaluation advisory board. He has served on a number of Government advisory bodies on social mobility and education. He is an adviser to the Office for Fair Access, and sits on the Social Mobility Transparency Board. He commissioned and is a co-author of the Sutton Trust-EEF toolkit for schools. He was previously an education journalist, working for the Guardian and Times Higher Education Supplement.

### **Steve Higgins**



Steve Higgins is Professor of Education at Durham University.

Steve joined the School of Education in September 2006 from Newcastle University, where he was the founding Director of the Research Centre for Learning and Teaching. Before working in higher education he taught in primary schools in the North East where his interest in children's thinking and learning developed.

He is one of the authors of the Sutton Trust/EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit and has given more than thirty keynote presentations and talks on using research evidence to support more effective spending in schools to policy and practitioner audiences based on this work. He has an interest in developing understanding of effective use of research evidence for policy and practice.

### **Becky Allen**



Rebecca Allen is Director of Education Datalab, on leave from her academic position as Reader in Economics of Education at UCL Institute of Education. She is an expert in the analysis of large scale administrative and survey datasets, including the National Pupil Database and School Workforce Census. Her research interests include school accountability, measuring performance, pupil admissions and teacher labour markets. She has experience of leading and delivering large research projects that have been funded by Government, research councils, educational foundations and charities. Rebecca is co-organiser of the PLASC/NPD User Group, a member of the researchED Advisory Panel,

the Sutton Trust Research Advisory Group, the ARK Mathematics Mastery Development Board and Teach First Impact Advisory Group.

### **Tim Leunig**



Tim Leunig is Chief Scientific Adviser and Chief Analyst at the Department for Education. He is also Associate Professor of Economic History at the London School of Economics.

He holds a PhD in economics, and has written widely on current and historical economic issues. He is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, the Royal Statistical Society, and the Royal Society of Arts.

### **John Tomsett**



John Tomsett has been a teacher for 27 years and a Headteacher for twelve. He is Headteacher at Huntington School, York. He writes a blog called "This much I know..." and is a co-founder of the Headteachers' Roundtable Think Tank. His first book is called, "Love over Fear, This much I know about growing truly great teaching." He remains resolutely wedded to teaching and helping colleagues improve their teaching.

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