

## **Response to the Department for Education's 'Consultation on school funding 2011 – 2012. Introducing a pupil premium.'**

**October 2010**

### **Introduction**

This response is being made by ROTA on behalf of the education sub-group of the Ethnic Minority Advisory (EMAG) to the Department for Work and Pensions. ROTA chairs this sub-group.

ROTA is a research and social policy organisation focused on race equality in health, education and criminal justice. We are a membership organisation. While we are a national organisation, for historical and demographic reasons, most of our work is London focused.

EMAG is a group of experts that advises on steps the Department of Work and Pensions might take to address employment inequality faced by Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. Its education sub-group is exploring how educational inequality can be addressed to improve labour market outcomes for BAME communities.

Education has been one of ROTA's policy priorities for over twenty years as it has continued as one of the main concerns of our membership over this period. This response is informed by our varied research projects, all of which generate evidence and recommendations relating to education, and our membership, of which a significant proportion are grass-roots BAME voluntary and community organisations.

This response highlights the need to increase the level of funding currently available to disadvantaged pupils through existing deprivation school funds and recommends that some such funds are targeted at groups of BAME pupils that are particularly disadvantaged in education regardless of their socio-economic status.

### **Overall comment**

EMAG's education sub-group welcomes the Coalition's commitment to addressing gaps in attainment. We welcome the recognition of the importance of ensuring that the Pupil Premium is targeted effectively if significant progress in addressing gaps is to be made. If the Pupil Premium is to be successful, it is essential it increases the levels of funding available to disadvantaged pupils. We are very disappointed that, contrary to the way the Pupil Premium has been publicised as additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, it is in fact a redistribution of existing deprivation school funds that are likely to be reduced through public spending cuts. If funds available to disadvantaged pupils are cut, gaps in attainment will be exacerbated and this initiative will fail. It is critical that there is greater transparency

in relation to the source of the funds and whether they are an increase or decrease on previous deprivation school funds.

When the Liberal Democrats first considered the Pupil Premium, their idea was to 'bring the funding levels [of] one million disadvantaged pupils immediately up to private school levels'. American researchers at the University of California (Equalizing Opportunity for Racial and Socio Economic Groups in the US through Educational Finance Reform 2005) used estimates of the effect of spending on the attainment of black children to say that nine times as much needed to be spent on black children to get their attainment up to the national average. Closing ethnic gaps and gaps in attainment by socio-economic status are obviously not directly comparable, but if the cost for getting the attainment of poor children up to the national average were just five times the current spending per pupil, the Pupil Premium would need to be over £25,000 per pupil. While in the current climate, such a figure is unlikely to be possible, it gives an idea of levels of funding that would not be acceptable.

The recognition of the issue around the ACA (that the General Labour Market (GLM) geographies which underpin the DSG methodology do not align with pay bands used for the teachers' pay calculations) is welcome. As stated in DfE's consultation document, this is a particular issue for the six boroughs that are treated as inner London for pay band purposes while being classified as outer London in the GLM methodology. We agree with the Government's proposal to apply an ACA to the Pupil Premium that takes into account the pay band geographies.

We are concerned that the Pupil Premium funds will not be ring-fenced. While many schools will target the Pupil Premium effectively, there is a risk that a proportion of it will not reach its intended beneficiaries, particularly at a time when public spending is reduced. Evidence that the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant has not always reached its intended beneficiaries, prompting the previous government to ring-fence it, justifies this concern. To alleviate such risks the Coalition must issue guidance and provide access to advice on how to target funds effectively. Additionally, performance management systems should look at outcomes for groups of pupils typically at risk from disadvantage and lower attainment levels in schools. The principles of equality enshrined in the new Equality Act 2010 should be central to such performance management systems, with information on outcomes broken down by narrow ethnic groups and payments based on effectiveness in addressing gaps in outcomes.

As the facts and figures below demonstrate<sup>i</sup>, there is a need for a continued focus on the educational inequalities that certain groups of BAME pupils face irrespective of their socio-economic status.

- At 16 Pakistani, Black African and Black Caribbean boys in England have results well below average. Children of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma backgrounds have assessments that fall further behind during the school years resulting in much worse results at 16 than others. This gap appears to have widened in recent years.<sup>ii</sup>
- At 16 white British, black Caribbean and mixed white and black Caribbean boys receiving Free School Meals have the lowest assessment of any group identified by gender, ethnicity and Free School Meals status, apart from Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children.
- Those from ethnic groups with GCSE results around or below the national median are much more likely to continue on to higher education than white British pupils with similar results. However, Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils are less likely to go to more prestigious

universities or to get higher class degrees. Low income acts as a barrier to post compulsory education. Improved educational achievement even at higher education levels for a number of BAME groups is not translating into labour market outcomes.

- Exclusion rates among Gypsy, Traveller and Roma pupils are around four times the rate for all pupils. Rates for black Caribbean, black other, white and black Caribbean and white and black African pupils are also significantly higher than average.<sup>iii</sup> Research by the former Department for Education and Skills argued that these disproportionate exclusion rates are partly attributable to conscious and unconscious prejudice from teachers<sup>iv</sup>. Disadvantages caused by exclusion are exacerbated because education provided through pupil referral units is often of poor quality.<sup>v</sup>

We recommend that either the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant, which will be reviewed in March 2011, is continued in its current form or that pupils from BAME groups that face educational inequalities are targeted through the Pupil Premium, even if they do not face the necessary levels of deprivation.

We would like to draw the Coalition's attention to the economic potential of addressing these inequalities linked to the current demographic profile of the school-aged population and future profile of the UK's workforce, of which a growing proportion are from BAME backgrounds.

Linked to the Pupil Premium, there is a need for a robust risk assessment on the growth in numbers of free schools and academies within the education system to identify what support is needed to ensure a segregated school system does not emerge, thereby exacerbating educational and associated inequalities. Existing academies have already been shown to do so.<sup>vi</sup> Free school<sup>vii</sup> systems in the US and Sweden have led to ethnically and socio-economically segregated systems in some areas.<sup>viii</sup> To minimise such risks, we recommend the introduction of an additional fund linked but separate from the Pupil Premium aimed at encouraging and enabling disadvantaged parents and communities to take advantage of the opportunities provided by current educational reforms.

## Consultation questions

### **What is your preferred deprivation indicator for allocating the Pupil Premium?**

The Coalition should carefully consider the findings of the review Frank Field is conducting on poverty and life chances, which is looking at new ways of measuring poverty and of measuring how effective public spending is in helping to tackle its root causes.

In relation to the Free School Meal (FSM) indicators, there is evidence of low take up of FSMs by many BAME families. This needs to be considered if an FSM indicator is chosen to ensure that pupils who would be eligible, but who do not take up Free School Meals, are identified and targeted through the fund.

Additionally, as considered earlier many BAME pupils who do not face deprivation are still disadvantaged and face unfair outcomes in terms of education. If the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is not maintained, this issue should be considered within the Pupil Premium methodology so that the educational disadvantages faced by such pupils are addressed through it. One way of doing this

would be to include in the methodology pupils from BAME backgrounds who have traditionally faced disadvantage (for example higher rates of exclusion, lower attendance rates and lower than average attainment levels), such as African Caribbean Boys.

Oxfam are currently developing a wellbeing indicator which DfE should also explore as a potential indicator.

### **Do you agree the coverage of the Pupil Premium should include Looked After Children?**

Given the scale of educational disadvantage, including significantly lower than average attainment levels faced by most Looked After Children, the Pupil Premium should be extended to Looked After Children.

### **Do you think the coverage of the Pupil Premium should be extended to include additional support for Service children?**

We appreciate the unique challenges faced by service children and that additional support may be beneficial. However, as service children have higher than average attainment levels and access to financial, social and other resources, which generally includes good quality education, we feel the Pupil Premium is not the appropriate source of such support.

### **Should the pupil count used to allocate DSG for 2011-12 continue to reflect dual subsidiary registrations for pupils at pupil referral units?**

Given the transience of the population in pupil referral units (PRUs) and the generally poorer quality of education already delivered through them, which the previous government sought to tackle through its Back on Track programme, we think dual registration should not be removed. This is because it is likely to have a significant impact on the quality of education that PRUs provide, without considerable cost savings.

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<sup>i</sup> Department for Education and Skills (2006) *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils aged 5 - 16*.

<sup>ii</sup> The National Equality Panel (2010) *The Anatomy of Economic Inequality*. Report of the National Equality Panel. Government Equality Office.

<sup>iii</sup> Department for Education and Skills (2006) *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils aged 5 - 16*.

<sup>iv</sup> Department for Education and Skills (2006) *Exclusion of black pupils: priority review. Getting it. Getting it right.*, London.

<sup>v</sup> Gillies, V (February 2010) *Behavioural Support Units: Excluded but Included?* Runnymede eConferences. Available at <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/events-conferences/econferences/econference/excluded-but-included.html>.

<sup>vi</sup> Weekes-Bernard, D. eds. (2010) 'Introduction', *Did They Get it Right? A Re-examination of School Exclusions and Race Equality*. Runnymede Perspectives. The Runnymede Trust.

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<sup>vii</sup> Free Schools are all-ability state-funded schools set up in response to parental demand.

<sup>viii</sup> Weekes-Bernard, D. eds. (2010) 'Introduction', *Did They Get it Right? A Re-examination of School Exclusions and Race Equality. Runnymede Perspectives*. The Runnymede Trust.