

Supplementary guidance:

inspecting the approaches taken
by schools and local government
education services to reduce the
impact of poverty on educational
attainment and wellbeing

Autumn 2019

The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- ▲ primary schools
- ▲ secondary schools
- ▲ all-age schools
- ▲ special schools
- ▲ pupil referral units
- ▲ independent schools
- ▲ further education
- ▲ independent specialist colleges
- ▲ adult community learning
- ▲ local authority education services for children and young people
- ▲ teacher education and training
- ▲ Welsh for adults
- ▲ work-based learning
- ▲ learning in the justice sector

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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What is the purpose?

To provide guidance to inspectors for evaluating approaches to reduce the impact of poverty

For whom is it intended?

Inspectors of maintained and independent schools, non-maintained settings and post 16/FE

From when should the guidance be used?

September 2019

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Supplementary guidance

The key Estyn documents that guide inspection activity are the inspection guidance handbooks for each sector. However, we also produce supplementary guidance to help inspectors to consider specific aspects of education and training further.

The supplementary guidance documents set out some key principles, considerations and resources for inspectors. They relate to all sectors that Estyn inspects, unless they state that they are for a specific sector. They expand on certain aspects of education/training (e.g. the inspection of literacy) or on ways of conducting inspections (e.g. the use of learning walks) or specific inspection arrangements (e.g. guidance on inspecting church schools).

The supplementary guidance documents do not aim to be comprehensive. Inspectors are not required to work through them exhaustively when covering any specific aspect on an inspection. However, inspectors may find them useful when responding to specific emerging questions that arise during inspections or when they wish to reflect or investigate further.

The supplementary guidance documents may help providers gain an understanding of Estyn's inspection arrangements. They may also be helpful to providers in evaluating specific aspects of their own provision.

Our inspection work is based on the following principles:

- Inspectors will approach inspection with a positive mindset to ensure it is the best possible professional learning experience for the staff in each provider
- Inspectors will take a learner-focused approach to inspection
- Inspectors will always focus strongly on the quality of teaching and learning
- Inspectors will seek out well-considered innovative practice
- Inspectors will tailor the inspection activities according to the circumstances in each provider as far as possible
- Inspectors will be agile and responsive to emerging findings and will use the increased range of inspection tools and approaches available
- Inspectors will consider everything in the inspection framework, but will only report on the key strengths and weaknesses within each provider

1 Introduction

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This document contains guidance on inspecting how well maintained schools (primary, secondary and special) reduce the impact of poverty on disadvantaged pupils.

The guidance provides a commentary and questions for inspectors to consider when evaluating evidence to determine the impact of the approaches taken by schools to reduce the impact of poverty on the educational achievement and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils.

The nationally agreed measure of disadvantage, in a school context, is whether or not a pupil is eligible to receive free school meals. Normally, schools with higher proportions of pupils that are eligible for free school meals serve communities with higher levels of social disadvantage.

The guidance should be read in conjunction with the useful sources of information listed in annex 3.

When inspecting the approaches taken by schools to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment, inspectors will consider:

- how well disadvantaged pupils achieve
- the progress that disadvantaged pupils make in learning and wellbeing from their individual starting points

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- the impact of approaches designed to improve the achievement and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils
- how well school's evaluate the impact of provision for disadvantaged pupils, including that funded through specific grants
- the extent to which schools take a strategic and co-ordinated approach to improving the achievements and wellbeing of disadvantaged pupils
- how well schools use resources, including specific grants for pupils eligible for free school meals

Annex 2 outlines how inspectors may consider this area during inspections of local government education services.

2 Reporting requirements and matters for inspectors to consider

Normally, inspectors will include a commentary about the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in inspection reports. They will also report on how well school leaders use specific grants to improve outcomes for all pupils eligible for free school meals. Where there are important strengths or shortcomings, inspectors may also comment about aspects of pupils' wellbeing and the quality of provision for this group. However, inspectors may decide not to include a commentary about pupils eligible for free school meals. For example, if there are too few pupils in this group to draw reliable conclusions.

1 Standards

Where appropriate, inspectors should report on the standards achieved and progress made by pupils eligible for free school meals. Under inspection area 1.2 (standards and progress of specific groups), inspectors should consider:

- the on entry assessment information for pupils that are eligible for free school meals
- the progress of pupils that are eligible for free school meals since starting school, from one phase to another, and during the school year
- whether all pupils that are eligible for free school meals progress as well as they could, for example the progress of more able and talented pupils
- the standards of work produced by pupils that are eligible for free school meals in lessons and overtime
- the attainment of pupils that are eligible for free school meals at the end of each stage of learning in comparison to pupils that are eligible for free school meals in other similar schools
- the attainment of pupils that are eligible for free school meals at the end of each stage of learning in comparison with pupils that are not eligible for free school meals
- whether pupils eligible for free school meals develop and apply literacy, numeracy and ICT skills as well as other pupils

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At key stage 4, inspectors should consider trends in performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in:

- the level 2 threshold, including English or Welsh and mathematics;
- the capped points score
- the proportion of pupils attaining 5 A*-A grades at GCSE or equivalent
- the level 2 threshold
- the level 1 threshold

At post-16, inspectors should consider the performance of students eligible for free school meals in the proportion of pupils attaining 3 A*-A grades at A-level or equivalent, 3A*-C grades at A-level or equivalent, the level 3 threshold and the average wider points score, where schools have presented this analysis.

Where the school offers the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification and can present an analysis, inspectors should consider the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals at different levels in key stage 4 and post-16.

2 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Under inspection area 2.2 (Attitudes to learning), inspectors should consider:

- the attendance rates of pupils that are eligible for free school meals and report on these by exception i.e. where there is a clear trend of weak or very strong attendance; they should focus particularly on the rate of attendance of eligible for free school meals pupils in comparison with others, for example the proportion with attendance of over 95%
- whether pupils eligible for free school meals display determination, resilience and perseverance in their learning
- how exclusion rates of those eligible for free school meals compare with other groups of pupils in the school and with similar schools
- how the participation rates of pupils eligible for free school meals at extra-curricular activities and trips and visits compare with other groups of pupils
- to what extent pupils eligible for free school meals take on responsibilities and make their views known in the school and wider community, for example the proportion that are on the school council
- how the attitudes to learning of pupils eligible for free school meals compare with other groups of pupils
- how effectively pupils eligible for free school meals improve their own learning and thinking to move on to the next stage of learning

3 Teaching and learning experiences

Under inspection area 3, inspectors should evaluate the impact of teaching and learning experiences on securing good rates of progress and high standards for pupils that are eligible for free school meals. They should consider:

- the impact of any particular strategies or approaches aimed at improving outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals
- how well the school tailors its curriculum and out of school learning to meet the needs of pupils eligible for free school meals
- the quality of provision to improve the literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills of all pupils eligible for free school meals, not only the lower ability
- how effectively intervention programmes address any deficits in the literacy and numeracy skills of individual pupils eligible for free school meals
- how well the school ensures equal access to pupils eligible for free school meals to enrichment experiences and out of school learning, including educational trips and visits
- how well the school works with the local community organisations and businesses to enhance the curriculum for pupils disadvantaged by poverty
- the quality and impact of work-related education for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds
- whether teachers have high enough expectations for pupils eligible for free school meals
- how knowledgeable staff are about the needs of pupils eligible for free school meals and how well teachers meet these needs?
- how well teachers track and monitor the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals
- how well teachers use assessment information to inform the next steps in learning for pupils eligible for free school meals

4 Care, support and guidance

Under inspection area 4.1 (Tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support), inspectors should consider:

- how well the school tracks and monitors the progress and wellbeing, including attendance and behaviour, of pupils that are eligible for free school meals
- how well the school uses this information to ensure that provision meets the needs of pupils that are eligible for free school meals, including those who are more able
- how well the school's intervention strategies, the mentoring or coaching of individuals or groups support pupils that are eligible for free school meals in their learning and wellbeing
- how well the school supports pupils that are eligible for free school meals to engage positively with the school and benefit from everything that it can offer
- how well the school engages with parents of pupils that are eligible for free school

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meals so that they can support their children well and raise any issues that may affect their child's learning and wellbeing

- how well the school works with the community and local organisations to support the needs of pupils eligible for free school meals
- how well the school use specialist services and agencies to support the needs of pupils eligible for free school meals
- how well the school supports pupils eligible for free school meals that also have an additional learning need
- how well the school provides access to resources that may not be available at home to pupils eligible for free school meals, for example access to a computer or a quiet place to work

Under inspection area 4.2 (Personal development), inspectors should consider:

- how well the school supports pupils that are eligible for free school meals, take on responsibilities and play a part in the school and wider community
- how well the school enables pupils that are eligible for free school meals to contribute to decision-making at a school level, for example opportunities to influence what and how they learn, and to represent their fellow pupils in groups such as the school council
- how well the schools support pupils eligible for free school meals to make choices about courses in key stage 4, the sixth form and for further or higher education
- how well the schools' personal and social education programme supports the development of the social and emotional skills of pupils that are eligible for free school meals
- how well the school attends to developing the confidence, motivation and self-esteem of pupils eligible for free school meals
- How well the school makes all pupils aware of the impact of poverty and supports them in identifying ways to improve their own or others' circumstances

5 Leadership and management

Under inspection area 5.1 (Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers), inspectors should consider:

- how well leaders set high expectations for pupils eligible for free school meals
- how determinedly leaders pursue the best interests of disadvantaged pupils
- how well leaders work strategically reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment and pupils' wellbeing
- how well the school uses strategic partnerships and collaboration with other agencies to reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment and wellbeing

Under inspection area 5.2 (Self-evaluation processes and improvement planning), inspectors should consider:

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- how well school leaders use first-hand evidence to identify strengths and areas for improvement in aspects of provision and the standards achieved by pupils eligible for free school meals
- how well leaders use this information to plan to improve outcomes for pupils that are eligible for free school meals
- how effective these plans are in improving outcomes for pupils that are eligible for free school meals
- how well the school evaluates the impact of improvement initiatives intended to raise standards for pupils eligible for free school meals
- how well the school considers national research to identify evidence-based approaches

Under inspection area 5.3 (Professional learning), inspectors should consider:

- how well the schools' develop staff awareness of the links between social and economic disadvantage and underachievement
- how well the school develops the knowledge and expertise of staff on strategies to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and their families
- how effectively leaders coach and mentor staff to work successfully with pupils that are eligible for free school meals
- how well schools support staff to access regional consortia programmes and resources to improve their work with looked-after children

Under inspection area 5.4 (use of resources), inspectors should normally report on the extent to which the school makes good use of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG), particularly where the amount of funding is relatively high. The judgement on how well the school uses this funding should match closely to the commentary on the standards and progress of pupils that are eligible for free school meals in their learning and wellbeing. Inspectors should also evaluate the use of other grants such as the Early Years Pupil Development Grant and the Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children. More detailed information about these grants is available in annex 1

Inspectors should consider:

- how well the school uses grant funding to raise the achievement and wellbeing of all pupils that are eligible for free school meals, including those that attain at average or above average levels
- how well the school consider its context and the needs of its learners when planning the expenditure, for example if pupils are linguistically behind when they join the school
- how well the school deploys resources to meet the needs of pupils that are eligible for free school meals
- how well the school evaluates the impact of grant expenditure on improving outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals
- how well leaders share resources and expertise, within and beyond its cluster, to improve the outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals
- how well the school benefits from regional funding for looked after children
- how well schools and settings work together to ensure dual registered learners

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needs are met across settings

- how well leaders in secondary schools ensure that the grant is used for early intervention and supports disadvantaged pupils throughout their time at school, for example in accordance with the recommended 60/40 split for key stages 3 and 4 respectively

Annex 1: Grant funding

In April 2017 the Pupil Deprivation Grant was renamed Pupil Development Grant, to reflect the intention to support a wider cohort of learners and an emphasis on learner progression alongside closing the attainment gap.

Pupil Development Grant is intended to support schools to overcome the additional barriers that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds face which prevent them from attaining as well as their peers, whatever their ability. In March 2017, the Cabinet Secretary for Education wrote to all schools to confirm the Welsh Government's commitment to PDG funding and to provide additional up-to-date information about changes to the allocation of PDG funding and eligible uses. In summary, these changes are:

- change the name to the Pupil Development Grant
- continue to fund pupils who require additional support via e-FSM or who are looked after in primary and secondary schools at a rate of £1,150 per learner for 2017-2018
- doubling the Early Years PDG to £600 for learners in the Foundation Phase
- extend the availability of PDG to support three year old looked after children who are in the Foundation Phase at the same rate as all other looked after learners
- extend funding to learners who are in EOTAS, rather than just those who are in pupil referral units
- provide reassurance of the commitment to the PDG for the remainder of this Assembly term.(amount of funding not guaranteed)
- work with the regional education consortia to strengthen management arrangements to support secondary schools in delivering an aspiration of at least 60% of PDG being invested at key stage 3 to address barriers to learning as they are identified

A copy of the cabinet secretary's letter and the most up-to-date information in relation to government policy is available [here](#)

The Welsh Government produced a range of guidance on the education of disadvantaged children. This includes guidance on the PDG and on the new Pupil Development Access Grant which can be used for school uniform, equipment, sports kit and activities. This guidance is available at <https://gov.wales/education-of-disadvantaged-children>

The guidance is clear on what the PDG can and cannot be used for.

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What schools must do

All schools must publish online their PDG allocation and an outline of their latest plans to use the funding to improve outcomes for deprived children. Where a school does not have a dedicated website it must make the information available via the local authority or consortium website or as part of school information published in hard copy.

Where a school has fewer than five eFSM learners it should publish a statement about the use and impact of the grant but should not disclose the number of eFSM learners or the amount of PDG allocation.

Schools do not have to produce a separate plan for the PDG. It may be produced as part of a wider school improvement plan.

Eligible uses for PDG

While the PDG must be used to support eFSM, LAC learners and learners educated other than at school (EOTAS). The grant does not have to be tracked to individual learners. Only learners from these groups may receive PDG-funded support from individualised programmes such as Catch Up, but the grant may also be used for whole-school strategies that disproportionately benefit eFSM and LAC learners. This includes buying in speakers and trainers for INSET days focussing on recognising and mitigating the impact of poverty on educational attainment; joint planning days for classroom teachers and teaching assistants to support eFSM and LAC learners; or developing appropriate tracking systems to identify the particular needs and evaluate the impact of interventions for these groups of learners.

Welsh Government Guidance on the use of the PDG can be found [here](#)

To achieve the above outcomes, schools should:

- adopt a whole-school strategic approach to tackling disadvantage
- make intelligent use of data tracking systems to identify learners' needs
- target interventions, monitor impact and evaluate effectiveness
- adopt strategies that involve parents and carers in learners' education
- engage communities in the life of the school and the school in the life of the community. Guidance on how schools can work with families and communities can be found [here](#)
- improve attendance
- recognise the relationship between wellbeing and standards and adapt practise to reflect this
- work in partnership with each other and with other organisations
- employ interventions that are evidentially the most effective

In addition to the PDG , the Welsh Government also provides funding via the Early Years PDG for eligible learners in nursery and reception.

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In July 2015, the Welsh Government produced guidance on the use of the Early Years PDG which can be found at <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150720-eypdg-en.pdf>

The Early Years PDG extends the entitlement of grant funding allocated through the PDG to pupils in nursery and reception classes in funded Foundation Phase education. Early Years PDG funding should be used to make a lasting impact on outcomes for disadvantaged learners. Regional consortia are responsible for ensuring that the grant is used for the purposes for which it is intended.

As with the PDG, the aim of the Early Years PDG is to accelerate the rate of attainment of children of all abilities from low income households to help them reach their full potential.

The Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children supports looked after children in compulsory education. It should be used by the regional education consortia to strategically deliver better targeted and flexible interventions on a regional basis. Flexibility has been built into the terms and conditions to enable funding to also support interventions aimed at former looked after children who have been adopted from care or are subject to a special guardianship order.

Useful information about the Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children is available [here](#)

Annex 2: Local government education services (LGES)

The document **Pupil Deprivation Grant – Essential guidance** (Welsh Government, 2015) identifies that grant allocations will be paid via the regional school improvement consortia on a bi-annual basis. The grant is 100 per cent delegated to schools/early years settings except in the case of the LAC element which will be managed regionally by the consortia.

The document also states that a school's regional consortium challenge advisor will:

- support schools to plan effectively, making sure that school development plans set out clear ambitions and plans for the use of the PDG to raise the attainment of children from deprived backgrounds
- ensure schools monitor and evaluate the impact of their strategies
- challenge schools to set stretching targets
- recover the grant when there is evidence that it has been inappropriately or ineffectively spent

The regional consortia are responsible for developing a strategic approach to use the LAC PDG effectively. Although this funding is delegated to the consortia local authorities retain responsibility for LAC in their role as corporate parent.

Suggested lines of inquiry for meeting with or the inspection of LGES

- What arrangements are in place to monitor the performance, progress and wellbeing of EFSM pupils?
- Do you compare their performance with other similar authorities and national data? How does your performance compare?
- What can you tell us about the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals within the authority at each stage of learning?
- Do you use this information to plan strategically to improve provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils? If so how?
- What is the overall strategy? How does the authority ensure that this strategy reaches the schools? Is this limited to a few schools or is this strategy well-understood by all?
- How effective is this strategy and what impact is it having on outcomes for pupils?
- Is there a designated person with responsibility for monitoring the performance of this group or is this responsibility with the regional consortium? If with the regional consortium, how does the authority know that its pupils' needs are met?
- How successful has this role been in improving outcomes? Can you give specific examples?
- How do you ensure that all schools get the support and challenge they need in relation to improving provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils?
- What professional support/development do school leaders, teachers and support staff receive? How effective is this in improving outcomes?

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- How do you monitor the use of the EYPDG/ PDG?
 - i) How effectively do schools in your authority use grant funding for disadvantaged pupils and how do you know? Overall, what are the strengths and weaknesses?
 - ii) Are there arrangements to monitor the quality and effectiveness of plans to spend the PDG? Do you monitor any evaluations of previous grant spending?
 - iii) What happens if a school does not use the funding appropriately?
 - iv) What happens if there is particularly good practice?
 - v) Can you identify any particularly good practice in the use of grant funding?
 - vi) Are there any arrangements to support schools with smaller amounts of grant funding to work collaboratively to maximise the impact of funding?
- Are there any examples of innovative practice to support harder to reach learners such as EOTAS pupils? Any examples of innovative partnerships between school and youth/ voluntary organisations?
- We are aware that the strategic planning responsibility for the LAC PDG lies with the regional consortium. However, the authority remains the corporate parent. With this in mind, how do you monitor the planning and provision through the PDG for LAC in your care?
- How effectively do you use the LAC PDG and how do you know?

Possible specifics

- What are the rates of persistent absence amongst efsm pupils? Does the authority monitor these? What are you doing to support/ challenge schools to reduce rates of persistent absence amongst efsm pupils?
- What arrangements are in place to improve family and community engagement in your schools?
- What support do pupils receive at key stage 3? How are you supporting/challenging schools to spend in accordance with the 60%/40% split?
- What early intervention strategies do you have to support this group of pupils and families?
- What is your on entry information telling you about efsm pupils when they begin school? What use are you making of this information?
- Are you involved in any research partnerships, for example with a university? What has happened as a result?

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Annex 3: Useful sources of information

Estyn publications related to poverty and social disadvantage can be found at <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/>

Annex 4: Eligibility for free school meals

Children whose parents receive the following support payments may be eligible to receive free school meals:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income, as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs, does not exceed £16,190
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' – the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- From 1st April 2019, Universal Credit, provided the household has an annualised net earned income of no more than £7,400 (as assessed by earnings from up to three of their most recent assessment periods)

Free schools meals are awarded where the parent or pupil meets the eligibility criteria and a request for free school meals has been made by, or on behalf of, the parent.

Young people who receive Income Related Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit, Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance in their own right may also be eligible to receive FSM.

The child will also need to be attending school full time, which can include full days at nursery and sixth form students.

Information on eligibility for free school meals for 2019/20 can be found [here](#)