

Kirsty Williams AM/AC
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair
Children, Young People & Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

9 September 2016

Dear Lynne,

I agreed to write to you about the research on the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) undertaken at Cardiff University. The investment made through the PDG since 2012 is having a measureable impact on raising the attainment of children from deprived backgrounds, and those that are looked after. All the evidence supports the view that the grant is helping to increase their life chances. Within the last few months research by Ipsos MORI/WISERD, our own Raising Attainment Advocate – Sir Alasdair MacDonald and the Public Policy Institute for Wales has demonstrated the excellent impact that the PDG has had.

The evaluation of the PDG was commissioned by Welsh Government in April 2013 with the aim of conducting a process and impact evaluation of the PDG. The Ipsos MORI and WISERD team at Cardiff University were awarded the initial contract for a period of two years. Following the announcement of the increase in PDG funding the contract was extended by a further year in April 2015.

The evaluation incorporates a number of elements. In year one (2013/14 academic year) evaluation activity included: a survey of 201 schools; in-depth case studies among 22 schools, of which 12 were complete at the time of reporting; and in-depth analysis of pupil attainment and absence data from the National Pupil Database (NPD). The first year report was published in October 2014:

<http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2014/141022-evaluation-pupil-deprivation-grant-year-1-en.pdf>

Key findings in year one highlighted that the introduction of the PDG led to schools funding a significant amount of new activity aimed at supporting pupils they identify as disadvantaged. Although the PDG represents a relatively small proportion of the total school budget (less than 4% on average), it amounted to significant sums of money that schools spend on activities to tackle disadvantage. Over half the

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

interventions funded using the PDG were not run in schools prior to the PDG's introduction. Even where activity pre-dated the PDG, it has usually been scaled-up as a result of the additional funding available to schools.

Year two (2014/15 academic year) evaluation activity included the remaining 10 case studies and further analysis of the NPD data. This report was published in December 2015:

<http://gov.wales/docs/caecd/research/2015/151203-evaluation-pupil-deprivation-grant-year-2-en.pdf> .

In year two key findings noted that the way the PDG is spent by schools appears to have evolved over the grant's lifetime. Several case study schools explained they had initially invested in resources and establishing data monitoring systems to track pupils' progress using the funds, but that funds are now concentrated on the delivery of interventions, and specifically on funding staff time to deliver them

For this third year (2015/2016 academic year) of evaluation the contractors have undertaken a refresh of the NPD impact analysis. The first draft of the final report is due to be received from the contractor shortly with a view to being published by the end of the year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

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Cabinet Secretary for Education