

Education Improvement Grant: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic Children
Written Submission for Children, Young People and Education Committee
8 December 2016

Lines of questioning

- 1. From 2015-2016, the Gypsy Children and Traveller Children Grant and the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant were merged into the new Education Improvement Grant. What impact has this had on the levels of educational support available to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and Minority Ethnic children, and their educational outcomes? (If this is a concern to you, how should this be addressed?)**

Local authorities in the region have taken individual responsibility and retained a portion of the Education Improvement Grant (EIG) for supporting the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) and minority ethnic (ME) children. The large variation among numbers of pupils from one local authority to the next requires a localised approach for supporting the education of these groups of children, in a bespoke manner. However, a localised approach does not mean that collaboration is not required.

The overarching regional school improvement strategy, namely, to build capacity in schools is beginning to influence work with children in this area. For example, targeted specialist support for particular year groups is currently serving to maintain a strong track record of educational outcomes for learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. The four strategic objectives within Welsh Government's *Qualified for life* improvement plan are now utilised to help monitor the effective use of the EIG. However, discrete objectives and accountability measures for this element of the grant would be more useful, given the localised approach to service delivery.

Levels of educational support vary according to local need. However, ME children generally do well in comparison to non-ME children across a range of educational performance indicators.

See **Annexe 1** on ME pupil performance across ERW.

- 2. How effective are other Welsh Government policies and strategies for supporting the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic children? (If this is a concern to you, how should this be addressed?)**

The Welsh Government needs to take a much stronger lead on GRT and ME pupil achievement for Wales through the development of aligned strategies that recognise diversity.



Overall, there is limited join-up between all local government projects and strategies. A national champion, with a proven track record, to co-ordinate the local strategies for supporting the education of GRT, and ME children would be a sensible way forward. With less resources available and growth in numbers of children within this particular cohort, it would be appropriate to collaborate in order to maximise best practice and share re-modelled methods of service delivery, where appropriate. Welsh Government's *Qualified for Life* plan is too widely focused in terms of raising educational outcomes for learners from GRT and ME backgrounds. Discrete strands to meet the distinctive needs of these children would be beneficial, in a similar way to national strategies for the pupil deprivation grant. Reducing the impact of poverty strategies do not sufficiently capture the needs of GRT and ME children. GRT children not in school may require further support to access wider services in order to attend school. A long-term, cohesive, strategy championed on a national level may support greater effectiveness in the future.

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

- in schools;
- by local authorities;
- by regional consortia; and
- by the Welsh Government.

(Do you know of examples of good practice or successful policies? If so, what are they?)

Good teaching and the embracing of an embedded approach to pupil wellbeing (including education on diversity and tolerance) remains the single most effective way of ensuring fair entitlement to all pupils in schools.

Local authorities require a single platform for sharing best practice at a time of reduced resource. In addition, a clearer understanding of how services can be delivered differently across Wales would be timely. As local authority resources have declined, capacity building for schools has become an often-used phrase. However, there needs to be a mutual understanding of what this can mean. Good practice on vulnerability profiles exists so that resources can be targeted. Further development of the Vulnerability Assessment Profile (VAP) is required across Wales.

Consortia have a strong role to play in identifying common ground and creating an appetite for pooling ideas and creating clear definitions of capacity building within schools. Experts with consortia (under localised services) could be working together to inform national strategy. Cross-consortia collaboration is essential so that similar local contexts can work together across Wales.

For Welsh Government, see question 2.

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

- Ensure that cohesive strategic planning is aligned in a manner that avoids the adopting of a "project-based" approach.
- Select an experienced national champion to work on a national framework that helps schools meet the needs of GRT and ME children, given that local authority resources are now reduced.



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

No

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

None

Annexe 1 (ERW background data)

The number of minority ethnic children in ERW schools has steadily risen over the last five years (2011-2016), peaking in 2015-2016 at 10,334 pupils.

Foundation Phase

Foundation Phase Outcome (based on mandatory areas of learning including Welsh/ English) Percentage of pupils achieving the Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI) has risen from 81% in 2011-2012 to 86% in 2015-2016. This is from a total of 606 Foundation Phase pupils in 2011-2012 and a total of 866 in 2015-2016. This indicates simultaneous growth in both amount of total Foundation Phase pupils and the amount from that total achieving Outcome 5 or greater at Foundation Phase – Growth of numbers is not stagnating performance.

Breaking this down, Foundation Phase Welsh Outcome (LCW) has risen from 80.8% to 96.2% in the same timescale, showcasing the highest percentage of growth from all FPI.

Smaller progress has been made in English and mathematics (83.4-86.8% and 87.6-89.3% respectively).

Similar progress has again occurred regarding Personal and Social Development, but it must be noted that the starting percentage of 91.1% obviously limited room for improvement. Nonetheless, this percentage has risen to 94.3% by 2015-2016.

Summary

All four of the FPI have seen higher percentages of ME children achieving Outcome 5 or higher, with Welsh language being a standout. English percentages, as well as Personal and Social Development percentages have also risen over this five-year period, although there has been a small fall from 2014-2015 in both. Mathematical Development has also seen percentages rise since 2011-2012, but there has been stagnation from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016.

Key stage 2

The number of key stage 2 ME pupils has risen within the region from 574 in 2011-2012, to 668 in 2015-2016. The percentage of pupils achieving the core subject indicator from 2011-2012 to 2015-2016 has also risen from 83.3% in 2011-2012 to 90% in 2015-2016.



While there was a minor drop from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014, this could be attributed to the 2012-2013 percentage jumping 4.1% (above the regional average) and regressing to the mean of growth the next year.

Level 4+ in Welsh among ME pupils is up to 92.6%, despite experiencing significant regression between 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 (87.5% down to 76.7%).

Level 4+ in English has risen from 85.5% to 91.5% over the same five-year timescale

In mathematics, the percentage of ME pupils achieving Level 4+ has risen from 88.7% to 92.4%, with similar growth being seen in science (88.2% to 92.8%).

Summary

All core subject indicators are showing growth between 4% and 6% over the last five years.

Key stage 3

The number of key stage 3 ME pupils in the region has grown from 493 in 2011-2012 to 538 in 2015-2016. Core subject indicators are showing significant growth, with the overall percentage of ME pupils achieving the core subject indicator rising from 73.6% in 2011-2012, to 86.4% in 2015-2016.

Level 5+ in Welsh has witnessed a minor drop in percentages, from 86.7% in 2011-2012 to 86.5% in 2015-2016, although it peaked at 91.2% in 2012-2013.

Level 5+ in English has shown steady, continuous growth over the five-year period, from 79.7% in 2011-2012 to 89.6% in 2015-2016.

Mathematics Level 5+ percentages have risen from 85% to 91.6% of ME pupils from 2011-2012 to 2015-2016, outperforming the regional averages in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

Science Level 5+ percentages have ultimately risen from 84.8% to 92.9% despite a drop in 2014-2015.

Summary

Core subject indicators for mathematics, English and science have shown growth over the last five years but Welsh has regressed 0.2%

Key stage 4

The number of key stage 4 ME pupils in the region has risen from 474 to 577 over the last five years

The percentage of these pupils achieving the Level 2+ threshold over this time has risen from 59.1% to 69.2%

