

## MEMORANDUM

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**To:** All Head teachers and Finance Officers via the School Leaders' Briefing  
**From:** Business Assurance  
**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020  
**Subject:** **2019/20 Thematic Review of Pupil Premium Funding in Schools**

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### 1. Background & Scope

- 1.1 The Council's Internal Audit (IA) team conducted a review as part of its 2019/20 IA Plan. We carried out a Thematic Review of Pupil Premium Funding in Schools. The aim of this audit was to identify and assess controls that are in place to manage key risks around the Pupil Premium Funding. The nature of a thematic review means that results were collated from all of the school visits and summarised into key themes, enabling an overall assurance opinion to be given.

### 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 7 schools were visited, and overall the IA opinion is that we are able to give **REASONABLE** assurance over the key risks to the achievement of objectives for Pupil Premium Funding in Schools.
- 2.2 The key themes identified during this review have been summarised below:
- a) **Guidance and promotion of funding** – Schools should consider promoting Free School Meals (FSM) by advertising the electronic eligibility checking system by London Grid for Learning (LGfL) on their website. This would enable families to check their child's eligibility for FSM without relying on their child's School to do this on their behalf;
  - b) **Accounting of funds** – Schools must ensure that their annual Pupil Premium Strategy document is clearly published on their website and contains the mandatory information set by the Department for Education (DfE). Schools should also consider incorporating the DfE's recommended information within the Strategy. Further, the DfE recommend implementing a 3-year Strategy to enable better implementation and monitoring of interventions to overcome pupils' barriers to achievement;
  - c) **Compliance with eligibility criteria** – Schools should consider regularly reviewing their SIMS data to ensure that pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding through FSM, Ever 6, service, or post-Looked After Children criteria are accurately captured. This would ensure that Pupil Premium income is accurately forecast and interventions are implemented for pupils according to their needs. Schools could also consider registering for an administrator account for the LGfL eligibility checking system. This would assist with the ongoing administration and management of eligibility checks for FSM and reduce the need to keep paper records of checks;
  - d) **Governing Body Scrutiny and Monitoring** – Schools should ensure that their Governing Body has good oversight of Pupil Premium, with regular consideration of educational barriers, effectiveness of interventions and pupil progress. Schools should consider having Pupil Premium as a standing agenda item for Governing Body meetings, and having a dedicated Pupil Premium link Governor, or member of teaching staff designated as Pupil Premium lead; and

e) **Monitoring, Assessment and Use of Funds and Interventions** – Schools should consider exploring a variety of ways to utilise Pupil Premium funding, e.g.:

- Using the funding to provide discounts or subsidies on school trips and extra-curricular activities for disadvantaged pupils;
- Providing bursaries to families of disadvantaged pupils to spend on school trips, clubs, uniform, or items to assist with their child's learning;
- Providing support for pupils' families outside of school, including language lessons, social work support, mentoring and mental health wellbeing sessions; and
- Providing clubs and booster sessions for pupils with specific educational, emotional and developmental needs, such as those with dyslexia or self-esteem issues.

2.3 Management have responded positively to our findings. The key findings and recommendations raised in respect of the risk and control issues identified are set out in individual Management Action Plans (MAPs) and will be subject to follow-up as part of our IA process.

### 3. Acknowledgement

3.1 Business Assurance would like to formally thank all of the officers contacted during the course of this review for their co-operation and assistance. In particular, the Head teachers and school staff involved in the review, whose advice and help were gratefully appreciated.

### 4. Internal Audit Contact Details

This audit was led by: Nick Cutbill  
**Senior Internal Auditor**

Audit support was provided by: Ryan Galvin  
**Internal Auditor**

This audit was reviewed by: Sarah Hydrie CMIIA, CIA  
**Head of Internal Audit & Risk Assurance**

Thank you,



Sarah Hydrie CMIIA, CIA  
**Head of Internal Audit & Risk Assurance**