

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Grant gwella addysg: Plant Sipsiwn, Roma a Theithwyr, a phlant o leiafrifoedd ethnig | Education Improvement Grant: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic Children

EIG 26

Ymateb gan : Gwasanaeth Cyflawniad Lleiafrifoedd Ethnig Sir Gaerfyrddin
Response from : Carmarthenshire MEAS

Q1. From 2015-16, 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?

Unlike other authorities we have been fortunate with a similar amount of funding with only minor reductions being made. However, our numbers have increased as have the number of schools we support in and funding has not increased to reflect this. This has resulted in MEAS support prioritised to the newest arrivals. We currently have 5 FTE staff and this has been consistent since the end of the MELAP project. Presently the work of the MEAS team is dominated by the welcome arrival of Refugee families in the authority. There is additional Home Office funding to employ dedicated Arabic TAs who require induction, training, support as well as the new pupils and families. This work is very much taking priority at the moment.
In general Carmarthenshire schools have support for EAL learners in addition to a 'light touch' capacity building support from our EAL Specialist teachers.

If this is a concern to you, how should this be addressed?

No Response

Q2. How effective are other Welsh Government policies and strategies for supporting the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic children?

Whilst we are making the move towards a capacity building model of service delivery, I feel that this should not replace one of pupil support. The role of the bilingual TA can't be underestimated particularly in the initial period of a new arrival. They allow for communication between pupils, their peers, parents and staff and allow the school to provide more targeted support to improve pupil wellbeing. In Carmarthenshire we also offer Polish GCSE and support schools in offering other home language GCSEs.

If this is a concern to you, how should this be addressed?

No Response

Q3. What more could be done to support the educational attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller and Minority Ethnic children: 1. in schools; 2. by Local Authorities; 3. by regional consortia; and 4. by the Welsh Government.

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EAL support works best when it is done in partnership with schools. EAL specialists provide support to new arrivals and more advanced learners to gain qualifications, home –school liaison and bilingual needs in addition to providing training and development to mainstream teachers. We work closely with Senior management teams in Primary, Secondary and Welsh medium schools to ensure that EM/EAL pupils are fully supported. This support could be bilingual support (interpreting and translating), in-class support and limited withdrawal support, signposting ESOL classes, primary to secondary and post 16 transition support. In the past we have applied for and benefitted from other funding sources such as the ESF which funded the successful Minority Ethnic and Language Achievement Project.

We work collaboratively with other services both locally and regionally, such as Social Services, LAC, advisory teachers, Psychologists and outside the authority we have close links with the Ethnic Youth Support Team, Global Learning Partnership, Show Racism the Red Card, British Council and our colleagues in other Minority Ethnic Achievement Services.

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

No Response

Q4. 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?

To protect funding for EMEAL children. It needs to be protected and based on need. This would give more stability to jobs and more optimism for the team.

Q5. 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 Response

Q6. Finally, are there any other issues relating to the terms of reference that you would like to draw to the Committee's attention?

No Response

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No Response