

DCSF Consultation on the future distribution of school funding NALDIC Response May 2010

The National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum (NALDIC) is the subject association for English as an additional language (EAL). It is dedicated to promoting the learning and achievement of bilingual pupils in schools and draws its membership from those who work in this field in schools, universities and other educational institutions.

We believe that young people from all backgrounds have rights and needs which should be met within our education system. NALDIC supports a method of funding which enables schools to make differentiated provision for the specific needs of their pupils, but which also allows local authorities to invest in and develop specialist services to support schools.

NALDIC's response is organised using the structure in the DCSF/DFE consultation document although responses are only supplied to consultation questions that fall within our area of interest.

Towards a new formula

1. Do you agree with the principles we are applying to the formula?
2. Do you agree with the proposals to mainstream the grants specified into the DSG?
3. Do you agree with the proposed elements of the formula?

1. Do you agree with the principles we are applying to the formula?

1. No. Whilst we agree that the funding system must support schools to prepare all children for adult life, we believe that the overwhelming funding focus on deprivation and its links to achievement, and in particular the plans for mainstreaming and extending the remit of the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is unhelpful.
2. Whilst we acknowledge that there are commonalities in the educational experiences and needs of deprived pupils, regardless of ethnicity, language or culture, there are also commonalities in the experiences and needs of black and ethnic minority pupils, regardless of deprivation or language, and of bilingual learners for whom English is an additional language, regardless of deprivation or ethnicity. We are concerned that an exclusive focus on deprivation will lead to the neglect of other issues impacting on the school experience of bilingual and minoritized students.
3. The proposed focus on narrowing the gaps in achievement '*particularly between deprived and non-deprived pupils*' and the plans to give further control to schools will significantly disadvantage black and ethnic minority pupils and those learning EAL. As a result, the proposed funding system will not support schools to prepare a significant proportion of our children for adult life.
4. The focus on 'underachievement' using specific measures related to the attainment of pupils in standardised tests has been helpful in demonstrating that not all pupils attain

equally well, nor make equal gains in their learning in our education system. However average performance in a narrow range of high stakes assessments is not the primary aim of education. We are concerned that the emphasis in the principles on 'narrowing the gaps in achievement that exist' will lead to a neglect of other, equally valid and important, educational needs and entitlements.

2. Do you agree with the proposals to mainstream the grants specified into the DSG?

5. No. As the consultation notes, the EMA grant has been '*an important grant in helping to narrow achievement gaps for Black and Minority Ethnic groups and in supporting the needs of pupils for whom English is an Additional Language*'. We believe that to secure and extend this success it is essential that funding streams related this work are retained as specific and ring fenced grants and not, as proposed, mainstreamed within the DSG
6. The mechanism proposed in the consultation is that the work previously funded through the EMA grant would in future be funded by Additional Educational Needs (AEN) funding related to Cognition and Learning and English as an Additional Language. The consultation proposal notes that, whilst the purposes of the grant '*remain*' to narrow achievement gaps for Black and Minority Ethnic groups and support the needs of pupils for whom English is an Additional Language, schools will have additional freedom to use the funding to target narrowing achievement gaps for '*any other underperforming group*'.
7. We consider this to be an unsafe course of action. Evidence suggests that successes in recent years have been achieved precisely because the EMA grant has been both specific and tightly targeted. The success of such tightly targeted approaches have been monitored over a number of years and identified by OfSTED in terms of good practice. The widespread insistence on a discrete ring fenced grant has been informed by previous experience when Section 11 funding was widely abused and was used for a range of purposes unrelated to the needs of ethnic minority and bilingual learners.
8. Given the pressing economic climate facing many schools and local authorities, it seems likely that mainstreaming distinct grants would mark the end of specific, targeted and successful streams of work related to meeting the needs of ethnic minority and bilingual pupils, both at school and LA level. If ring fenced EMA funding is replaced by AEN funding relating to Cognition and Learning and English as an Additional Language, there are no safeguards in place to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met and this would significantly disadvantage ethnic minority and bilingual learners.
9. For example, Primary School X has a large population of bilingual pupils who overall mostly meet national expectations at the end of Year 6. A small number of new to English learners from Eastern Europe arrive in the middle of Year 5. Under the proposed system there is no requirement for the school to make any provision for new learners, nor to ensure that more advanced bilingual learners are reaching their full potential. Furthermore there is no mechanism to check that provision is being made for these groups.
10. Similarly Secondary School Y has a relatively large number of Y10 girls who perform poorly in mathematics and are unlikely to reach 5 A*-C (including English and Maths) benchmark. Alongside this, the relatively small number of students on roll from Black British

backgrounds at the school are at a much higher risk of exclusion than average. Secondary School Y uses its funding to support girls' achievement in Maths. Under the proposed system there is no requirement for the school to use any of its funding to address the issue of over-representation of Black students in exclusions.

11. Monitoring mechanisms regarding provision for bilingual and minoritized learners under the new proposals would fall within the enhanced remit of School Improvement Partners and school provision would also be part of OfSTED inspections. However we have significant concerns that professional development for both groups of educational professionals in relation to these issues has been limited. For example, in the recent past the CRE has challenged OfSTED's effectiveness in ensuring that schools were compliant with the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000).
12. Mainstreaming EMA funding and removing the ring fencing would leave AEN spending decisions vulnerable to local and national political and societal pressures. It needs to be recognised that there is significant hostility to school and education spending related to migrant and/or minoritized groups and equality issues more generally. The removal of ring fencing would therefore leave provision for these groups exceptionally vulnerable and is likely to result in a negative impact on equality.
13. In view of the above concerns we believe that it is essential for any Equality Impact Assessment which has been carried out on these proposals to be made public
14. We recognise that the DCSF/DFE has taken steps to allay concerns regarding the mainstreaming of the EMA grant by proposing initially comparable funding and allowing local School Forums to include factors relating to EAL and disadvantage into their funding formulae for 2011-2013. Whilst these are welcome they are only short term. In our view, it would be preferable to simply extend the life and ring fenced nature of the existing grant for these years whilst investigating a fresh approach to securing adequate provision for EAL learners and funding to promote equitable achievement and combat disadvantage with the support of those working in the field.
15. The consultation proposes allowing LAs to *'retain a portion of this funding to run a centralised service to support schools in narrowing achievement gaps for under-performing pupils and meeting the specific needs of bilingual learners, where they consider this is more practical than delegating all the funding to schools'*
16. Whilst this proviso is welcome, the consultation gives no further details as to how this would operate in practice and for how long. This lack of clarity is worrying. Research suggests that local authority central EAL/EMA services have been a hugely significant part of the successes that have been achieved in this area and the need for such services continues to grow. For example, many schools in rural areas have limited expertise in working with bilingual young people. However many such schools are now taking new and relatively isolated, bilingual learners on roll. It is essential that they can readily access expert guidance and first language and EAL support. In most cases this is provided by local authority services but the existence of such services is threatened by the proposals.
17. Policy assumptions regarding EAL have long been based on the premise that most pupils learning English as an additional language are long term residents and that their needs are predictable and stable and therefore can be met (and funded) through their

assimilation in local schools. The impact of increasing globalisation means this is not the case. It is essential that the nature of globalisation is recognised in any revised funding regime. We need to ensure that funding regimes and provision are flexible enough to respond to the needs and rights of short term sojourners as well as long term bilingual residents. There is consistent evidence from across the country that local authority central services are an essential component in providing for such needs.

18. It is clear that many schools are not yet fully able to cope with the initially high costs of providing well for pupils who arrive during the school year at early stages of learning English as an additional language. A significant number of representations have been made to government for increased support with this aspect of education. However the current proposals make no reference to these often unmet needs and mention only an unclear option for Schools Forums to decide to retain funds centrally to meet such needs.
19. During the survey work carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers on reviewing the formula for distribution of the DSG, a clear message emerged regarding EAL which was that **'Headteachers indicated that they would favour the retention of locally devolved funding to support EAL needs, in addition to easily and immediately accessible local budgets and resources'** (PWC, 2009). This is quite different from asking local Schools Forum to 'hand back' to local authorities a proportion of the DSG to provide for central services, particularly as it is well documented that EAL need is already under-funded at school level.
20. It is clear from these findings that continued and increased ring fenced funding to support EAL needs which combine locally devolved funding along with centrally held accessible local budgets and resources has the support of schools. Given this support, it is unclear why the consultation proposes mainstreaming an existing, albeit flawed, funding solution and replacing it with one which will not deliver in any way the outcomes which schools are seeking.

3. Do you agree with the proposed elements of the formula?

21. We are concerned that the proposed elements of the formula that relate to bilingual and minoritized learners are located in Additional Educational Needs. Whilst the need to learn English as an additional language can be conceptualised as a need requiring greater support, we are concerned that funding to support minoritized learners is limited to the use of underperforming groups, along with FSM, as a proxy indicator of Cognition and Learning Needs.
22. The consultation notes that *'Cognition and Learning difficulties, by definition, will manifest themselves in groups with slower progress and ultimately lower attainment. We therefore propose allocating funding by reference to underperforming groups'*. We believe this association between underperforming groups and cognition and learning difficulties is a deficit one which will do nothing to address low expectations of some groups of pupils such as Gypsy, Roma, Travellers, Black pupils nor economically disadvantaged pupils. We feel this further stigmatises certain groups of learners.
23. We are disturbed that the formula does not include an additional educational need related to mobility. Much work has been done tracing the impact of mobility on achievement and we would like to see mobility represented as a factor which leads to additional educational needs. In addition, during the survey work carried out by PwC,

social and transitional needs were mentioned frequently by participants as part of the costs associated with supporting EAL learners. So it is surprising not to see mobility reflected in the formula factors.

Additional Educational Needs

5. Do you agree with the proposed methodology for distributing money for additional educational needs?
6. Which is your preferred indicator for distributing money via deprivation ? Why?
7. Do you agree with the indicators, other than for deprivation that we have proposed for each need?
8. Will the Local Pupil Premium mechanism help funding to be more responsive to changes in pupil characteristics?
9. Is it right that local authorities should each develop their own pupil premium mechanism?

5. Do you agree with the proposed methodology for distributing money for additional educational needs?

24. As noted above, we believe that mobility is a significant factor which gives rise to additional needs and should be included as an AEN. Disproportionate levels of mobility are noted within certain groups of ethnic minority learners including Gypsy, Roma and Irish Travellers as well as bilingual learners, particularly those who are recent migrants or who are from refugee or asylum seeking families. Failure to recognise mobility as a causal factor in achievement and a cost to schools will be disadvantageous to these learners and to those schools for whom mobility is a significant issue.

6. Which is your preferred indicator for distributing money via deprivation? Why

25. It should be noted that many migrant families are not eligible for Out of Work Tax credits and the child tax credit and therefore will not feature in many of the deprivation allocation options.

7. Do you agree with the indicators, other than for deprivation that we have proposed for each need?

26. As noted above, we believe that identifying groups who are disadvantaged by ethnicity and socio-economic status as a proxy indicator for Cognition and Learning needs is an unhelpful and deficit model. A more suitable Cognition and Learning needs indicator would be achievement below a given level in standardised tests, as is proposed for High Cost Pupils.

27. We believe that funding to address the educational disadvantage faced by Black and Minority Ethnic pupils and by pupils suffering from socio-economic disadvantage should be recognised by a ring fenced Equalities grant funding stream. This funding stream would be discrete and aimed at tackling inequalities. As such, these funds would be tightly targeted to particular groups of disadvantaged pupils and could be closely monitored. Experience suggests that successful strategies to combat these forms of inequality and disadvantage require action with individual learners, at whole school level, and across authorities.

28. As is currently envisaged, the Cognition and Learning indicators make no provision for locally underachieving groups, only those at risk of underachieving in national terms. As a result, local authorities and therefore schools facing particular issues relating to the achievement of locally underachieving groups of learners will not benefit from relevant funding. For example Yemeni children are not defined as a nationally under-achieving group and as a consequence attract no EMAG funding that focuses on under-achievement. Nor are they identified within the proposed Cognition and Learning indicators. Yet in the six local authorities with significant Yemeni populations, this group comes at the bottom of achievement tables. Again we believe that this could be tackled by replacing ethnicity and FSM as indicators for Cognition and Learning with reference to agreed national benchmarks as well as through discrete and substantially increased Equalities grant funding to address the disadvantage faced by ethnic minority learners and by learners who are economically disadvantaged.
29. We welcome the fact that funding to support the entitlement of bilingual learners to develop their English language competence is recognised as distinct from funding related to underachievement. However we believe that EAL funding is best allocated through a ring-fenced and discrete grant with a commitment to long-term sustainability.
30. Whether distributed via AEN or through a continuing ring fenced grant, we believe funding should be allocated on a needs-based formula based on an entitlement to support and on indicators of English language fluency. The count of EAL learners, whilst simple and transparent, is insufficiently refined to accurately target EAL need which we believe requires a national measure of English language fluency.
31. Research disseminated nationally has clearly identified that the stage of English language fluency has a clear and direct bearing on pupil achievement. We would ask the DFE to consider how the EAL information currently available through the School Census could be developed to more accurately reflect the very differing needs of pupils at different stages of their English language development.
32. During the survey work carried out by PwC, it was noted that EAL, used as a proxy, did not reflect levels of language need nor social and transitional needs and that neither belonging to a particular ethnic group nor the number of years residency properly reflects the degree of support required by different EAL learners. Given the increasing globalisation in our schools, and the changing nature of migration from long term settlement to both long and short term residency we would urge the DFE to look afresh at the issue of a national measure of English language fluency.
33. We would therefore argue that in the longer term what is required to fairly fund schools is a nationally coherent and systematic approach to EAL learners' needs. Pupils who enter the school system with English as an additional language should have an entitlement to additional and appropriate support for their learning which is defined in a code of practice and represented by an EAL pupil premium. The code of practice would define the learners' entitlement to additional provision as they acquire English. In this way we could ensure that funding allocated to schools for support of such pupils is used directly to equitably meet their learning needs. In the same way as the Government has expressed concern that deprivation funding has not reached the pupils for whom it is intended, we are concerned to ensure that funding intended to meet the needs of EAL learners will fund their entitlement to support.

34. It should be noted that AEN in Scotland (or Additional Support Needs – ASN) relating to English as an Additional Language includes some elements of entitlement and through this a monitoring mechanism to ensure that funding is appropriately directed to needs or entitlement.
35. We recognise that pupil entitlement to appropriate support is some way from realisation. In the interim we would argue that the EMA grant should continue as a separate grant and that local authorities should, as now, be able to retain a percentage of the grant to support schools to ensure that pupil need is equitably met and to provide entitlement to recently arrived learners. This would provide much needed stability in the forthcoming two year period as well ensuring the continuance of local centres of expertise which are currently needed more than ever.
36. It is widely acknowledged across the education sector that current EMA funding is inadequate to meet the needs of EAL learners. Although substantial amounts of money are being allocated to EAL teaching, bilingual and other support for migrant and ethnic minority children, funding has not kept pace with numbers of children with EAL entering English schools over many years.
37. A number of curriculum documents are now referring to the importance of children and young people having access to opportunities to use their home languages to enhance their learning and well-being in schools. For example, the Primary National Strategy Document: Supporting children learning English as an additional language, guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage states as its first principle: *Bilingualism is an asset, and the first language has a continuing and significant role in identity, learning and the acquisition of additional languages* (DCSF 2007). The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook states that: *Children must have opportunities to engage in activities that do not depend solely on English for success, and where they can participate in ways that reveal what they know and can do in the security of their home language.* (DCSF 2008, 14.). This principle and the associated implications for funding of suitably qualified and experienced practitioners are not reflected in the formula. This is a clear example of contradictory messages being given to schools and undermines the development of appropriate pedagogies and practices in schools.
38. We would argue that it is time for a fresh look at funding in order to equip our schools to support children and young people learning EAL adequately in an era of globalisation. Pupils who enter the school system with English as an additional language have an entitlement to additional and appropriate support for their learning. We consider that an EAL pupil premium may be appropriate. Funding should be significantly in excess of the sums currently devolved and should be supplemented by the current Migration Impact Fund. In this way it is possible that we will be able to arrive at the situation demanded by schools for locally devolved funding to support EAL needs, in addition to easily and immediately accessible local budgets and resources.

8. Will the Local Pupil Premium mechanism help funding to be more responsive to changes in pupil characteristics

39. As stated above, we believe there should be a nationally mandated pupil premium which sets out exactly how much should be allocated to individual EAL learners with a link to actual need through a national system of EAL assessment. We believe this would

ensure that if a school recruits a large number of pupils at early stages of learning English, for example, they can see that they will get additional funds in their budget. We want the funding associated with those EAL learners to be able to move from year to year between schools with those pupils.

15. Do you support our plans for the transitional arrangement for mainstreaming grants?

40. We recognise that the DCSF/DFE has taken steps to allay concerns regarding the mainstreaming of the EMA grant by proposing initially comparable funding and allowing local School Forums to include factors relating to EAL and disadvantage into their funding formulae for 2011-2013. Whilst these are welcome they are only short term. In our view, it would be preferable to simply extend the life and ring fenced nature of the existing grant for these years whilst investigating a fresh approach to securing adequate provision for EAL learners and funding to promote equitable achievement and combat disadvantage with the support of those working in the field.
41. As stated above, we believe the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant should be retained as a discrete grant for an interim period whilst a more appropriate mechanism is developed. Should the mainstreaming of this grant go ahead we would wish to see specific transitional arrangements put in place for the grant. As a minimum these should for the period 2011-2013 include the continued right for local authorities to retain 15% of the grant equivalent or £150,000 whichever is the greater.
42. The details of the proposed shared transitional grant arrangements are not specific enough for us to envisage exactly what safeguards are in place for the current LA portion and seem to relate only to the adaptation of School Finance arrangements to allow for current EMA funding formulae to be included as formula factors locally. We consider this is insufficient protection and so would wish the DFE to consider a specific transitional arrangement for this grant.

18. If a contingency arrangement for local authorities is to continue, funded from the DSGH what areas should it cover and what should the criteria be for triggering eligibility?

43. We believe that the Exceptional Circumstance Grant (ECG) is guaranteed in its current form for 2010-2011. The fact that this grant has been received by a number of authorities in relation to EAL learners indicates how globalisation has impacted on patterns of settlement and migration and how school funding is not yet responsive to this. We believe that this grant should be continued for the period 2011-2013 whilst a fairer and more responsive system for identifying and meeting EAL need and entitlement is developed.

References

PricewaterhouseCoopers (2009) *Review of the distribution formula for DSG Strand 1: Additional Educational Needs (AEN)* Accessed online at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/doc/14194/Strand%201%20-%20AEN%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf>

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