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## **THE PUPIL PREMIUM – GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY NEEDED**

Schools receiving the pupil premium grant are failing to meet legal requirements to be accountable to parents. That is the conclusion from a study published the week in advance of the government's prestigious pupil premium awards ceremony.

Of the 48 schools named as regional winners or commended for the pupil premium awards, only a third have fully complied with the requirement to publish information on their website about how they are using the grant.

The pupil premium grant is the government's flagship scheme to narrow the gap in education between rich and poor. The grant provides schools with additional money, currently £900 for each disadvantaged pupil, to enable them to narrow or close gaps in attainment connected with low income and disadvantage.

The government recently announced the pupil premium awards to identify and celebrate schools that have best used the pupil premium to 'make a real difference to the attainment of disadvantaged pupils'. Forty-eight schools have been named as regional winners or commended for their work and have been invited to a prize-giving ceremony on 8 July in Whitehall.

Schools are required by law to publish on their website information about the amount of pupil premium grant they receive, how they are using it and the impact of this spending. 'Although schools are able to make their own decisions about how to spend Pupil Premium funding,' states the Department for Education in their just published evaluation of the grant, 'they are accountable for its use.'

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure schools are transparent and accountable, particularly to parents. But of the 48 schools singled out for special mention next week, only a third have fully complied with the requirement. Also, less than a fifth seem to have fully complied with accountability regulations connected with the Equality Act 2010, which covers such issues as disability, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation.

The study of the websites of 48 schools was made by a team of educational consultants: Bill Bolloten, Sameena Choudry and Robin Richardson.

Speaking on behalf of the team, Bill Bolloten said: 'The government is keen not to micro-manage what happens in schools. On the contrary, it trusts schools to judge how best to use the grant. But it says schools must be

accountable by publishing information for parents and other interested people on their website. It's worrying that so many schools have not kept their side of the bargain. It is also odd that the requirement to be accountable and transparent does not appear to have been an aspect that the independent education experts on the judging panel took into account.

Sameena Choudry said: "The 48 schools are probably all making good use of the grant, and the judges who have selected them for special praise have probably made good decisions. It's surprising, though, that so many have not complied with regulations about publishing information for parents."

Robin Richardson said: "The government must get a grip. Its laissez-faire approach to equality is not working. Schools need much more support, advice, guidance and challenge than they are receiving. This is particularly urgent in view of the declining role and responsibility of local authorities."

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### Notes for editors

1. There is further information about the study of 48 schools named as regional winners or commended for the pupil premium awards at <http://leftcentral.org.uk/2013/07/02/equalities-and-accountability-the-pupil-premium/>
2. More information on the 2013 pupil premium awards is available at: <http://www.pupilpremiumawards.co.uk>
3. In order that schools can be accountable to parents and others, they are required to publish on their website a) their pupil premium allocation in respect of the current academic year, b) details of how it is intended the allocation will be spent, c) details of how the previous academic year's allocation was spent, and d) the impact of this expenditure on the educational attainment of those pupils at the school in respect of whom grant funding was allocated. These are statutory requirements as outlined in the School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1124/made>

4. On 2 July 2013, the Department for Education published *Evaluation of pupil premium*, a research report looking at how schools spent pupil premium funds and what they plan to do with funding in future years.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-pupil-premium>
5. The following independent education experts were on the 2013 Pupil Premium Awards judging panel:
  - Dr Kevan Collins, Chief Executive of The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).
  - Baroness Floella Benjamin OBE DL, Chancellor of the University of Exeter.
  - Sir William S. Atkinson, Executive Headteacher, The Phoenix Canberra Schools Federation.
  - Dr John Dunford, Chair of Whole Education, the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors and the charity Worldwide Volunteering.
  - Professor Becky Francis, Professor of Education and Social Justice at King's College London.
6. The Equality Act 2010 introduced a new public sector equality duty that replaces the previous three equality duties for race, disability and gender. Section 149 of the Act imposes a general duty on 'public authorities', which include schools, to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations.

Schools must also meet two specific duties. Firstly to publish information that demonstrates adequately an awareness of the diversity of the school population and how it has had due regard for the three aims of the general equality duty. Secondly, schools must prepare and publish at least one specific and measurable equality objective.