

Report on the Use of Pupil Equity Funding

The 2018 AGM carried the following motion:

"That this AGM instruct Council to investigate and report back on the use of the Pupil Equity Fund money in schools to establish whether it is successfully targeted at raising the attainment of pupils from the most deprived families."

Background

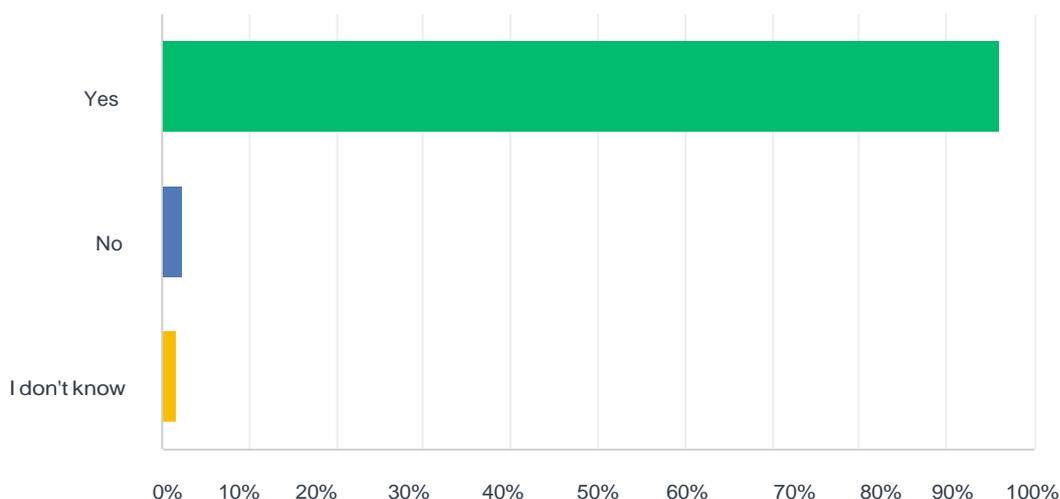
1. The Scottish Government's Scottish Attainment Challenge is about achieving equity in education and has a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is a three-year funding stream (2017-20), providing £120m per annum nationally as part of the £750 million Attainment Scotland Fund.
2. The Pupil Equity Funding is allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap¹. 95% of schools in Scotland have been allocated funding. The EIS believes that that staff should be consulted as to how PEF funding should be spent within their schools.

Methodology

3. In May 2019, all school EIS reps were surveyed using the online SurveyMonkey platform and were asked three groups of questions – the use of pupil equity funding being the first group.
4. The survey was issued to around 1883 school reps, 566 responded to the survey. This is a response rate of 30% which gives a statistically valid result.

Results - Data Collected from EIS Survey

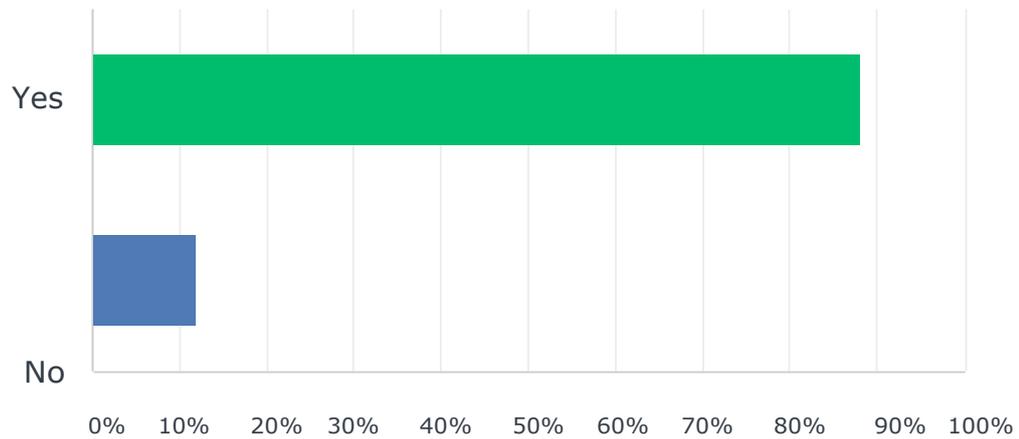
5. Question 1. Has your school received PEF Funding?



¹ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/pupil-attainment/>

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	96.00%
No	2.36%
I don't know	1.64%

6. Question 2. Do you know what your school's PEF funding has been used for?

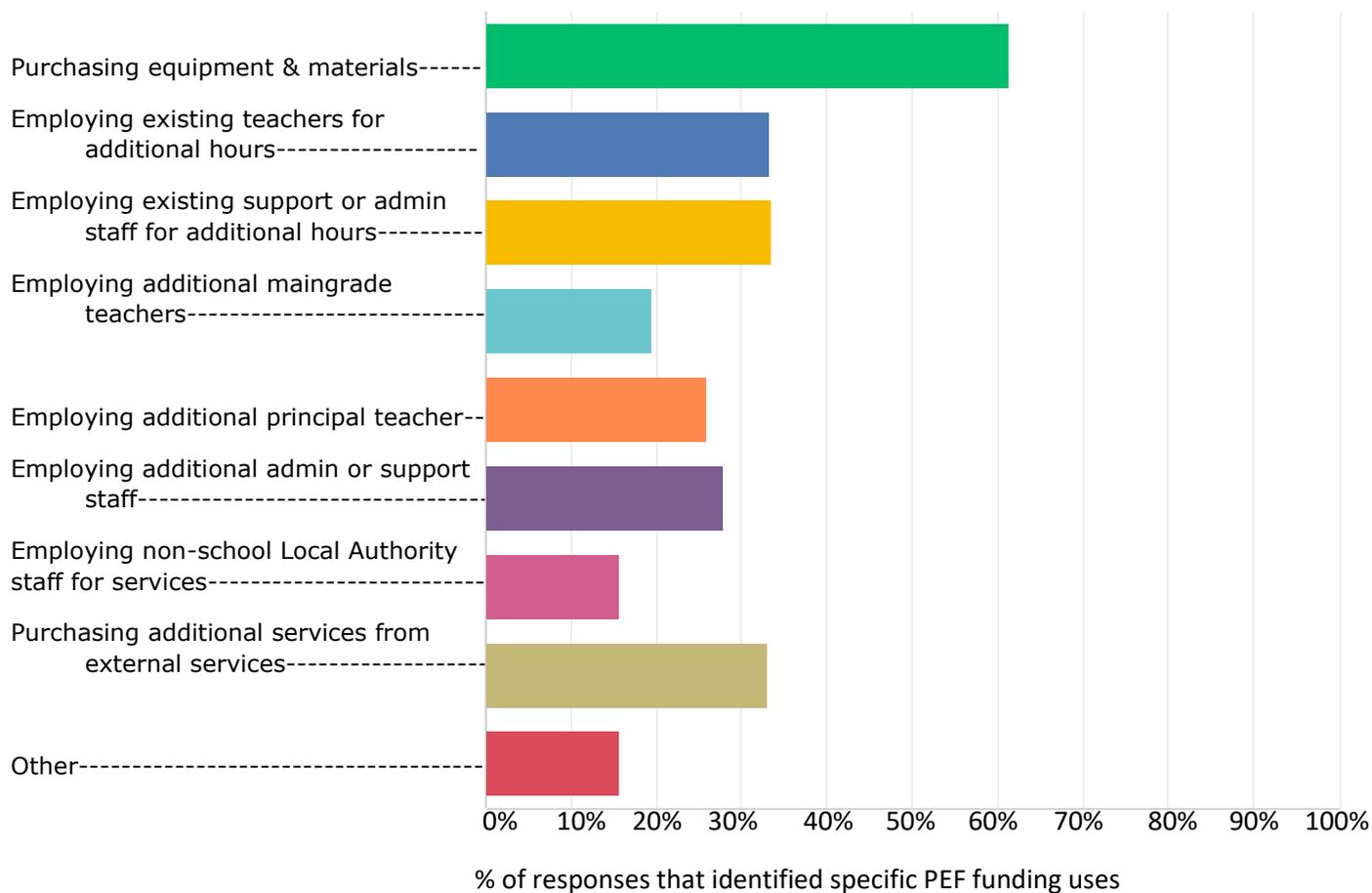


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	88.17%
No	11.83%

7. Question 3. What has the PEF Funding been used for?

Table 1 – % of responses that identified specific PEF funding uses

Answer Choices	
Purchasing equipment and materials (inc breakfast clubs)	61.23%
Employing existing school teachers for additional hours	33.33%
Employing existing school support or admin staff for additional hours	33.57%
Employing additional main grade teachers	19.39%
Employing additional principal teacher	26.00%
Employing additional support or admin staff	27.90%
Employing non-school staff (from the Local Authority) for additional hours e.g. children services worker, speech & language therapist etc	15.60%
Purchasing additional services from external sources – e.g. sports coaching	33.10%
Other	15.60%



8. In addition to the responses outlined above to Question 3, 100 separate responses were written. A number of these individual answers were similar to those answers offered in the drop-down menus (shown in Table 1) whilst others gave other uses of the PEF funding and these are listed below:

- i. A small number of responses stated that the PEF funding had been used to fund school trips and/or outdoor learning, for example:

"To assist pupils of families who couldn't otherwise afford, to attend residential trips such as Benmore camp and other school trips which extend vital learning e.g. Museums, clothing etc to fully participate"

- ii. A small number of responses stated that PEF funding had been used to fund training or purchase resources to raise attainment. One rep reported that a minibus had been bought. For example:

"Training for staff to deliver new teaching approaches Provision of tokens for lunches during school holidays"

- iii. A small number of responses stated that the aim of their school was to "nurture" pupils, for example;

"Providing Whole School Nurture Provision with Nurture Room and Teacher"

- iv. A few responses stated that the school had set up a "hub" to deliver PEF

activity, for example;

"We have created a support HUB staffed by Family Support Worker, Outreach Worker, Outdoor Education Worker, CLD Worker, Counsellors, Social Worker."

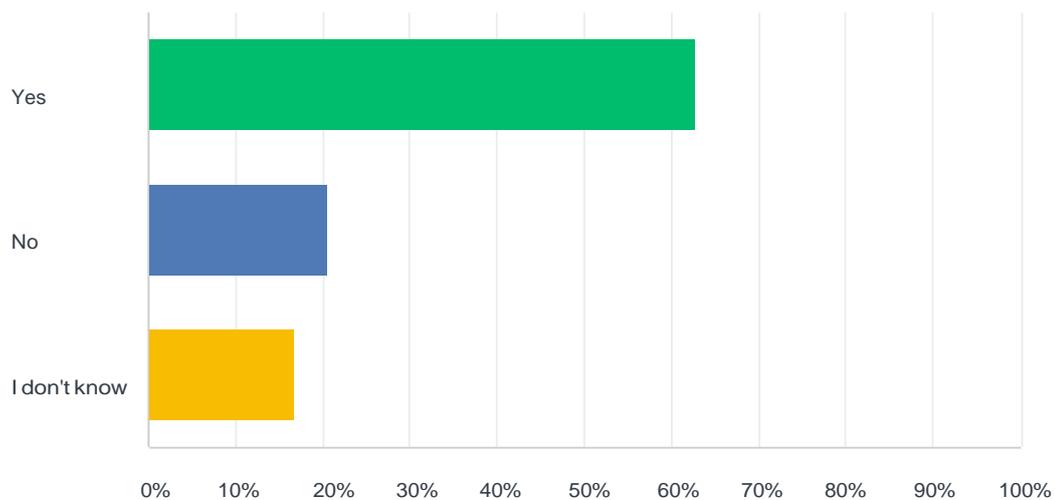
- v. A few reps reported that schools had obtained or purchased support from the 3rd sector in order to deliver PEF activity, for example;

"... Also it was used for Bernardo's to come and support pupils and parents and this did happen and was very effective."

- vi. A small number of the responses stated that PEF funding was used for the whole school, for example;

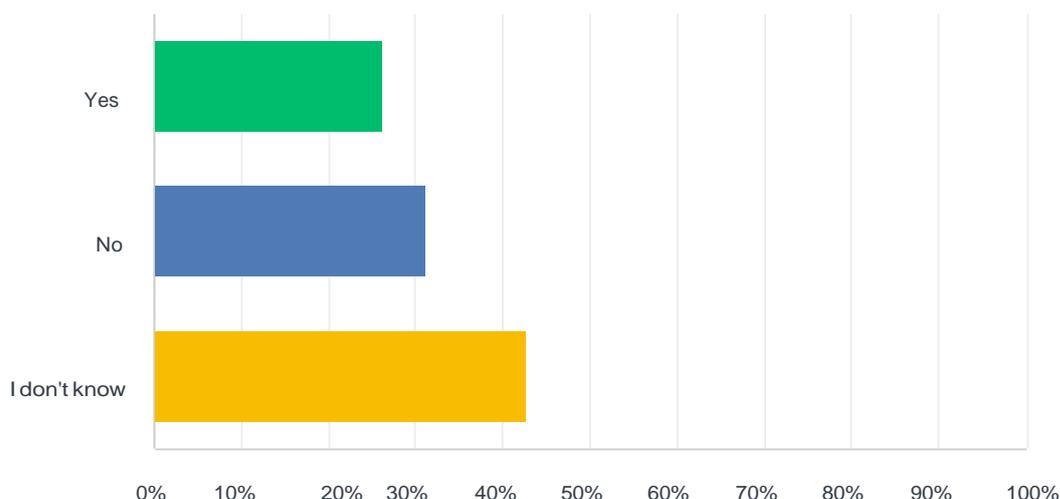
"Technology; Smart Panels for all classrooms. Whole school reading scheme."

9. Question 4. "Do you think that your school has spent PEF funding by targeting it on pupils from the most deprived families?"



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	62.73%
No	20.50%
I don't know	16.77%

10. Question 5. Do you think PEF funding has raised attainment for pupils from the most deprived families?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	26.20%
No	31.19%
I don't know	42.62%

11. **Question 6 asked "What is your overall perception of the success of the additional PEF funding for your school?"** This was an open question to which 393 respondents gave individual answers. The 393 answers were sorted according to whether the respondents thought PEF funding had been successful.

- i. Just under a half (47%) of respondents thought that the PEF funding had been successfully used. Typical responses are copied below:

"It has been beneficial to help raise attainment and target pupils who need it. Hard to evaluate success at this stage but short-term success is positive."

- ii. A number of positive comments also referenced that the PEF funding had been used to 'plug gaps' arising from other funding cuts; had been used for pupils in general as opposed to targeting SIMD 1 or 2 pupils in particular; had allowed additional resources to be used and to maintain staffing levels.

"Plugging some of gaps caused by reduced funding"

- iii. A small number of positive comments also stated that whilst targeted pupils' attainment may not have been raised, their social skills and attendance had improved. For example:

"Pupils in our school. In terms of confidence and self-esteem the pupils have had very positive experiences"

"Children from disadvantaged families attend school more and are more settled"

- iv. Around a third of responses (33%) gave no view as to whether PEF has been a success (frequently stating it was too soon to say). There were also a number of comments on the PEF which did not directly address whether the PEF had been a success or not at their school. Typical comments are copied below:

"I'm not sure despite the best will in the world that PEF funding will close the attainment gap. It is much bigger than that. It might help but it's too early to tell as this isn't a short fix problem..."

"Not entirely clear. I think that some aspects cannot actually be measured at all."

- v. Around 78 (20%) of respondents to Question 6 thought that the PEF funding had been not been successfully used or were critical of the PEF programme. For example:

"Not effective. The primary drive is to find ways of measuring 'success' so that further monies can be received. The whole project has been rushed and is not particularly well thought out"

- vi. A small number of responses were critical of the way in which PEF was allocated or used, or that ASN should be a higher priority than PEF. For example:

"To me it has helped us better meet learner's needs through providing funds required to maintain support staff. My concern however is that with this only being a temporary measure, it does not go far enough in solving the problem of having enough provision to meet the growing number of pupils with ASN."

- vii. A small number of responses stated that the headteacher had excluded staff from the process of deciding how PEF money was to be spent, whilst a few responses suggested that the PEF funding was being used to promote the headteacher's favourites. For example:

"... Also, our HT decided to employ an additional principal teacher without consulting staff."

Conclusions

12. The findings from the survey of EIS reps are set out below:

- a. Almost all (96%) respondents stated that their school had received PEF Funding and 88% of responders stated they knew what the PEF funding had been used for.
- b. The survey showed that the most common use of PEF funding was: "Purchasing equipment and materials (inc breakfast clubs)" (61% of

responders), followed by (in decreasing order); "Employing existing school support or admin staff for additional hours"; "Employing existing teaching staff for additional hours"; "Purchasing additional services from external sources – e.g. sports coaching"; "Employing additional support or admin staff"; "Employing additional principal teacher"; "Employing additional main grade teachers" and "Other".

- c. The majority (62.7%) of responders stated that PEF funding had been targeted on children from the most deprived families.
- d. Question 5 of the survey shows that 26% of respondents felt that the PEF funding had been successful in raising attainment for pupils from the most deprived families, with 31% stating that it had not successfully done so. The largest group (42.6%) of respondents stated that they did not know whether PEF had raised attainment – some saying that it was too soon to measure the impact of the PEF funding.
- e. Question 6 of the survey was an open question asking "What is your overall perception of the success of the additional PEF funding for your school?" The following trends were identified:
 - i. Around 188 (47%) respondents thought that the PEF (funding) had been successfully used. PEF has, according to many respondents, delivered improved attainment for some targeted pupils and has raised the confidence and self-esteem of some targeted pupils.
 - ii. Some survey responses have indicated that PEF has benefitted more pupils than it is aimed at - for example the whole school.
 - iii. The survey responses have shown a wide variety of ways in which PEF funding has allowed each school to deliver bespoke programmes to improve the attainment of pupils from the most deprived families. This has created a range of activities, some of which are innovative. It has led, in the view of the respondents, to many successful activities being implemented and it has led to some unsuccessful activities being implemented.
 - iv. Around a third (33%) of respondents to Question 6 gave mixed views as to whether the PEF (funding) had been not been successfully used and around 20% of respondents stated that the PEF programme had not been successfully used.
 - v. A small number of responses gave the opinion that PEF funding was problematic due to its fixed term nature and that it would have been better spent on the non-time limited general education budget or on ASN in particular. A small number of responses stated those with educational needs (such as ASN) were losing out due to PEF, since PEF is targeted at pupils from deprived families and not on the basis of educational need. A small number of responses cited a collegiate decision-making process on PEF activities within their schools whilst

other responses identified non-collegiate decision making within their schools on the PEF funding.

Recommendation

The Executive Committee use this report to inform the Time to Tackle Workload Campaign and to issue advice to LAs/Headteachers.