

VoicED completes market research for the National Audit Office

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VoicED, the specialist education research arm of DJS Research Ltd, recently completed research for the National Audit Office which revealed that extra funding from the Department for Education (Pupil Premium), which schools receive to support some of the country's underprivileged pupils and narrow the attainment gap, has been effectively used and has helped to close the gap.

Elliot Simmonds, Panel Manager for VoicED, had the following to say:

“As a market research agency VoicED takes great pride in supplying high quality data to our clients, be they public or private sector organisations. However, to be asked to provide results relating to something as important as Pupil Premium, which has a huge impact on individual learners across the country, is a huge privilege. Our panel is one of the most respected in the country and we look forward to continuing to provide best-in-class insights in to the future.”

VoicED were commissioned by National Audit Office to conduct an online survey, which questioned almost 550 head teachers and deputy head teachers on how Pupil Premium funding is spent within their school. The online survey revealed that 94% of school leaders target support at underprivileged and disadvantaged pupils, as opposed to the 57% who did the same before the introduction of the Pupil Premium.

Speaking on 30th June, Amyas Morse, head of the National Audit Office, said:

“Early signs are that the Pupil Premium has potential, but it will take time for its full impact to become clear. As it takes the policy forward, the Department will need to review whether spending more in this way would allow it to close the attainment gap more quickly. The high degree of local discretion has benefits and costs. Some schools don't appropriately focus funding on disadvantaged pupils, and some spend funds on activities which are not demonstrably effective.”

Since the Pupil Premium has been introduced, the attainment gap between pupils from a socio-economically disadvantaged background has closed by 4.7 percentage points within primary schools, and 1.6 percentage points in secondary schools, in the period between 2011 and 2014.

However, the findings also revealed that the impact of the Pupil Premium is sometimes diluted due to some schools not spending the funding how they should.