

## Written evidence submitted by the Education Policy Institute

Robert Halfon MP  
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House of Commons  
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10<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dear Robert,

Many thanks for your letter of 4<sup>th</sup> June. We were very pleased to be able to help the Education Select Committee consider some of the implications and lessons that are emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic.

In response to your follow up questions, we set out our thoughts below.

### **Summer Programmes**

We have recommended that summer wellbeing programmes should be primarily aimed at supporting children's wellbeing and building their social skills and should therefore be staffed mainly by a combination of qualified early years, play and youth workers.

However, we also know that schools continue to play a vital role in local communities, well beyond providing education within the classroom walls. We think that schools could help by providing venues for summer programmes, advertising the programmes through their usual communication to parents and carers and working with programme staff (as well as social care teams) to identify and support children where there are safeguarding or more acute wellbeing concerns.

Teachers, particularly those specialising in art, drama, music or PE, could also volunteer to help run the programmes but this should not be compulsory.

It is important that the summer programmes are focused on wellbeing and not "academic catch up" and it is also important that teachers, many of whom will have been working tirelessly and consistently over the lockdown period, are neither compelled nor obliged to deliver these programmes.

### **Extra Pupil Premium Funding: Ringfencing and accountability**

As we have discussed, our recommendation is that the Pupil Premium should be doubled (for at least one year) for pupils who will be in Year 1, Year 7 and Year 11 in September. We consider that the current accountability and transparency requirements relating to the Pupil Premium strike the right balance between holding schools to account and giving them the flexibility and autonomy to respond to the needs of their pupils and communities.

Some additional checks and balances that could apply to the additional funding, include:

- Ensuring that all of the additional funding is spent in-year, with no flexibility to carry it forward; and
- Requiring schools to publish a separate statement on their website about how they are using the additional funding.

The government should also provide new guidance on the most effective ways of spending the additional funding and this could be a useful opportunity to focus on interventions aimed at improving wellbeing and non-cognitive skills as well as academic programmes.

Where possible, conversations with parents and carers should take place in order to understand how the needs of pupils may have changed or been affected as a result of the pandemic.

### **Measuring and tracking the impact of catch up interventions**

This will be incredibly difficult to do with any degree of rigour or reliability. We do not know what the counter-factual would be had the pandemic not happened and it would also be near impossible to isolate the impact of any intervention from other factors in a pupil's life.

A better option could be for schools who are delivering similar approaches and interventions to share lessons with each other on how they are implementing those interventions. This would be entirely voluntary but could be organised and facilitated by EEF research schools.

### **The role of Ofsted in supporting remote learning**

We feel strongly that Ofsted should not have a role in assessing or judging individual schools on the delivery of remote learning. Schools were not set up to deliver education in this way and have had to try their best to respond to a global crisis. We do not think it would be fair or appropriate to hold them to account in this way.

We do, however, know that schools are supporting pupils and communities in a number of different ways. Ofsted could play a valuable role in collating examples of innovative and good practice in preparation for any further waves of the pandemic.

We hope these are helpful suggestions and we are very happy to provide any further assistance as needed.

Yours sincerely,



**David Laws**  
Executive Chair



**Natalie Perera**  
Executive Director

June 2020