

# £10m extra to help most deprived pupils

**Abbie Wightwick**

Education editor  
 abbie.wightwick@mediawales.co.uk

**A**N EXTRA £10m is being given to schools to help Wales' most disadvantaged pupils, the Welsh Government has announced today.

More than £90m will be invested in the Pupil Development Grant - the new name for the Pupil Deprivation Grant - to help those in nursery and reception and children in local authority and foster care.

The programme is being expanded from the amount allocated to the youngest pupils, to extending funding for pupils not educated at school and providing more support to those in local authority care. Changes, which come into effect next month, include doubling the grant to £600 per eligible child in nursery and reception classes.

The Pupil Deprivation Grant, launched in 2012 and now renamed, provides additional funding to schools based on the number of pupils on their roll eligible for free school meals and also for pupils who are looked after by local authorities, including those who are fostered.

Under the changes announced today support for all three-year-old "looked after children" will also be expanded and funding can now be used to support previously looked after children who have been adopted.

Support to pupils educated outside the school setting will be increased to include those both in and outside pupil referral units (PRUs). Currently only those in PRUs receive the support.

Latest Welsh Government figures show the attainment gap at GCSE among the most disadvantaged pupils is narrowing but still significant.

The divide between GCSE grades of pupils from less wealthy homes entitled to free school meals and other pupils fell last summer.



► **Kirsty Williams, Education minister, at the Senedd, Cardiff Bay**

Rob Browne

dents entitled to free school meals got five good GCSEs including English or Welsh and maths while 66.8% of other pupils achieved the same benchmark.

The difference, known as the "attainment gap", is now 31.3%, down from 32.5% the previous year, a Welsh Government spokesman said.

Money for children who are eligible for free school meals is passed directly to schools,

ble learners. Schools decide how to spend the money to help pupils with advice from the regional education consortia around Wales.

Announcing the changes, Education Secretary Kirsty Williams said: "It remains our national mission that every child has the opportunity to succeed.

"I am pleased that this grant is having a significant impact in breaking the link between

has dogged our education system. However, there is more to do, which is why we are extending the grant to ensure every child has a fair start in life. I am also announcing a small but significant change in the name of the grant.

"Not only does this reflect the excellent practice that already exists across Wales, but this more positive name will better emphasise learner progression alongside reducing