BREAKING THE LINK
between disadvantage and low attainment

EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

department for
children, schools and families

This Breaking the Link document is intended as the first in a series, each of which will go into more detail on narrowing gaps in outcomes for specific groups, and the implications for different services and delivery partners – covering the Department's wider agenda for children and families.

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1. Foreword by the Secretary of State

Every child should be able to succeed, to leave primary school secure in the basics, to get the skills and qualifications they need, and to go on to further education and a good job. All children deserve this kind of good start in life, regardless of where they live, where they go to school, or their family background.

This is the mission shared by hundreds of thousands of school leaders, teachers and other staff in tens of thousands of schools across the country: to raise achievement for all pupils, and to break the historic link between disadvantage and low educational attainment.

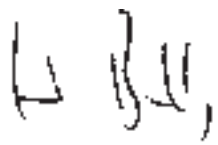
Over the past ten years, backed by sustained investment, the schools system has been transformed. Teaching has never been a more attractive or higher status profession. School facilities have never been better. Young people have never had such an exciting range of opportunities, and results have never been higher. This is a massive credit to the professionalism of all those who work in education.

At the same time that standards have risen across the board, the most deprived areas and the most deprived schools have made the most progress. Yet there is still far too strong a link between family income and achievement at school. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals – roughly the poorest 15% – who get 5 or more good GCSEs including English and maths has gone up from under 15% in 2002 to 23.5% in 2008, and they are narrowing the gap with other pupils at both primary and secondary school. But they are still less than half as likely to get these good GCSE grades as children who are not entitled to free school meals.

The highest performing maintained schools, serving some of the most deprived areas, have gone even further: they have broken the link between poverty and attainment for their pupils. Now the challenge is to break the link for all pupils, whether they are in a school or an area with concentrated deprivation, or as most of them are, in more average schools spread out across the country.

This is a challenge particularly to headteachers and their senior staff: to secure the best possible progress for their disadvantaged pupils. But schools can't do this on their own. The solutions do not lie uniquely with schools, but stretch out across all other services. So the challenge applies to local authorities, and to the leaders of every service which supports young people, from early years to age 19 and beyond. And, of course, our commitment to abolish child poverty by 2020 is a key part of our long term strategy.

I am really inspired by the example of the best schools leading our system and breaking the link. I am determined that government will back schools and teachers to do even more, so that every child, and not just some, can succeed at school.



Ed Balls
March 2009

2. The evidence

School standards in England have been transformed over recent years

It is a tribute to the hard work of thousands of teachers and school leaders that educational standards have been transformed in England over the past decade. Backed by sustained investment, schools have achieved large rises in the attainment of their pupils. The school system has never been better at fulfilling its purpose: to help every child and young person develop and succeed, so they are secure and ready to progress to the next stage of their life.

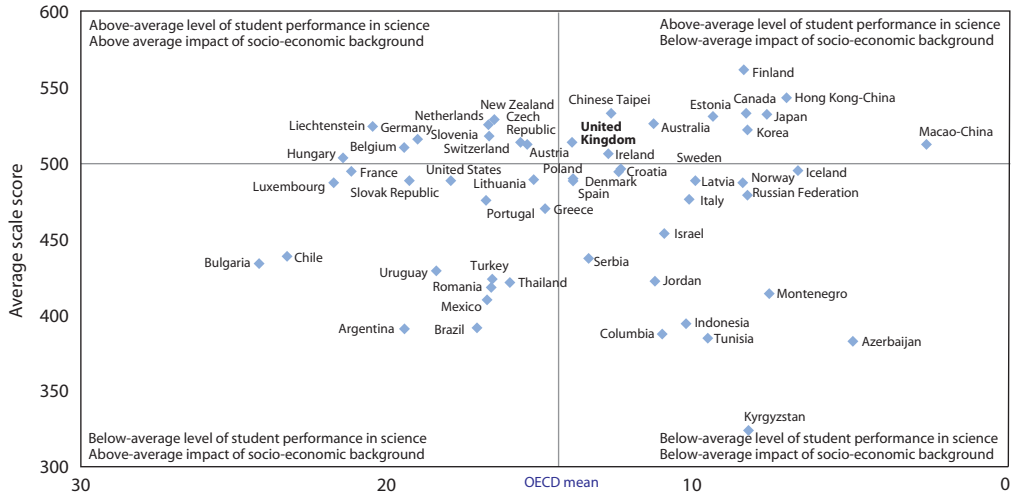
Over this period England has gone from below to above average in comparison to other advanced countries. This picture is confirmed by independent international evidence such as the recent Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2007 study of attainment at ages 10 and 14. This was published in December 2008, and showed that English children have made significant gains in maths since 2003[1] and are continuing to achieve excellent results in science. In both subjects and at both ages English children perform in the top ten of the 59 countries studied. England is the most consistently high performing European country in the 2007 study, at both ages and for both subjects.

But these international studies also show there is further to go in some important respects to become truly world class. For example, the recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results showed that although England's average results in the 2006 assessment were well above the OECD mean, there was more variance, both between schools and especially between pupils in the same school, than in the most successful countries such as Finland.

The chart opposite, which uses the PISA 2006 data, illustrates a similar point. The closer a country is to the top of the chart, the better its average student performance in science. The closer a country is to the right-hand side of the chart, the weaker the link between the socio-economic background of its pupils and their performance in science. In both respects, the UK is above average, but in both respects there is further to go to join the very best of the world's education systems.

1 Average scales scores up from 531 to 541 at age 10, and 498 to 513 at age 14

Chart 1 – UK's performance is good but not yet world class



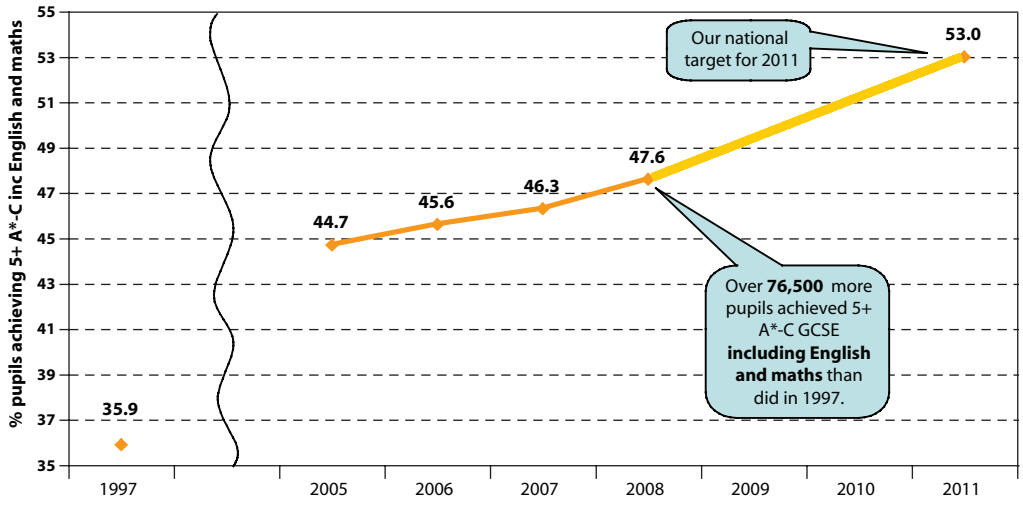
More young people than ever are achieving good exam results

Since 1997 school standards, measured by average attainment of the pupil cohort, have risen steeply with strong improvement in national tests and examinations.

In primary schools the rise has been sustained and consistent. In 2008 81% of pupils achieved at least level 4 (national expectations) in Key Stage 2 English, and 78% in mathematics, whereas in 1997 these figures were 63% and 62%. Last year over 100,000 more 11 year olds than in 1997 achieved the target level for their age in English.

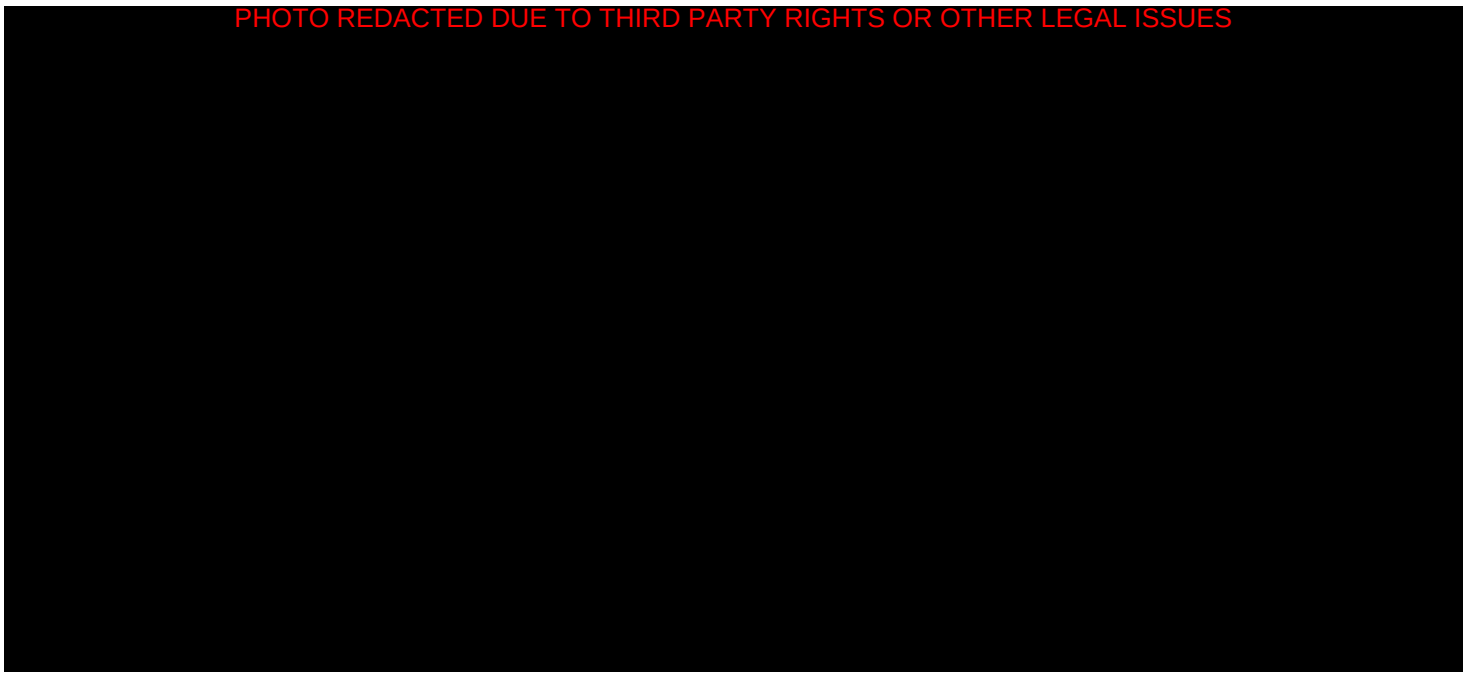
There is a similar picture for secondary schools. In 1997 45% of 15 year olds achieved 5 good GCSEs (5AC), and an estimated 36% achieved the tougher measure including both English and maths (5ACEM). By 2008 these figures had risen to 65% and 48% respectively, with the result that the number of pupils achieving these levels last year were 129,000 and 76,500 larger than in 1997.

Chart 2: GCSE results including English and maths have risen significantly over the past decade



Line indicates a break in the time series between the 1997 estimate and the actual figures for 2005 onwards.

These are the best results ever, and they represent life-changing opportunities, to progress to further and higher education and a secure future, for a very large number of young people every year. It is a success for which schools can legitimately take pride and credit. However, these are the **national averages** of improved attainment, measured across the whole cohort of over 600,000 young people every year. We also need to look at the picture in more detail at the level of different areas, different schools, different ethnicities, and finally – if we want to break the link between a child's chance of success and their background – at pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds.

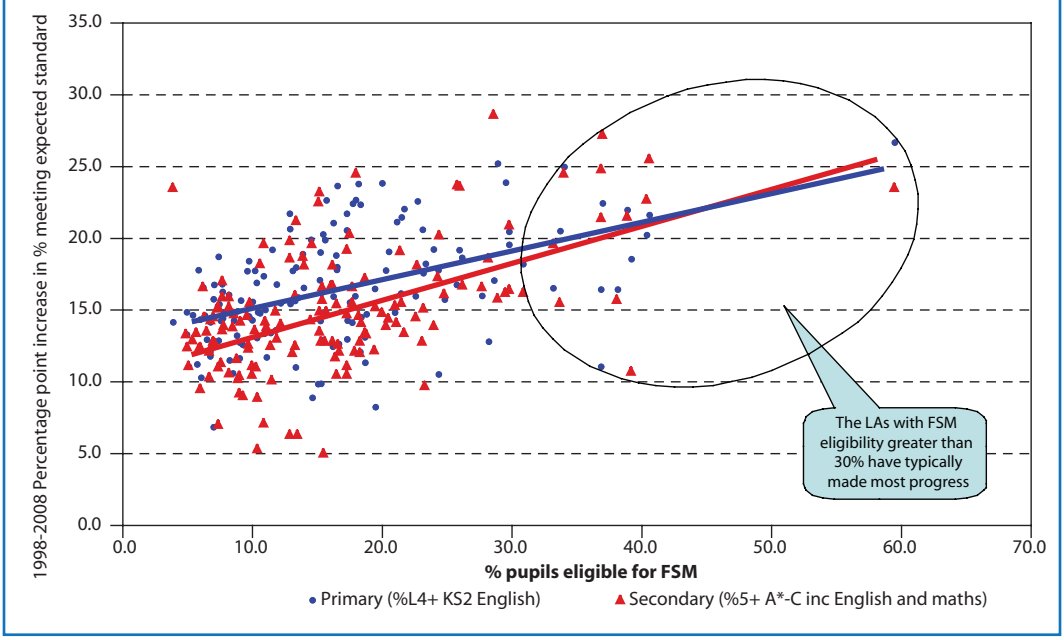


Attainment has risen in every local authority, and the most deprived areas have made the biggest gains

The first question is whether the improvement in standards over the decade has been equal across all parts of the country. In fact the answer is no: the most deprived areas, using the proportion of young people entitled to free school meals (FSM) as our proxy measure of deprivation,[2] have made the biggest gains. Over the past decade standards have risen in every single local authority. But the biggest improvements have been in those local authorities where schools have had to contend with the highest levels of deprivation. This is illustrated in Chart 3 below.

The chart shows the improvement between 1998 and 2008 in the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Key Stage 2 English (blue dots) and the proportion of 15 year olds achieving 5 good GCSEs including English and maths (red triangles). Each dot or triangle represents a local authority with the most deprived authorities towards the right-hand side of the chart. Moving from left to right – from least deprived to most deprived authorities – the scale of improvement increases.

Chart 3 – Over the past decade more deprived local areas have made more progress in their primary and secondary schools



Because deprivation is often concentrated in small pockets within local areas, some schools have significant concentrations of disadvantage. So as well as comparing different **local authority** areas, we should also examine the link between the level of disadvantage in a **school** and the attainment of its pupils.

2 See Annex

The schools serving the most deprived pupils have made the most progress

Over the past decade the whole range of schools, from those with the lowest proportion of pupils from low income backgrounds to those serving very disadvantaged communities, have improved their results substantially. But it is the schools with the most deprived intakes which have made the largest gains.

In the chart below, each set of three vertical bars represents a group of schools. In each set of three bars, the left hand (yellow) bar is for 1999, the middle (green) bar is for 2005 and the right hand (purple) bar is the latest year (2007 for primary and 2008 for secondary). For each bar, the box shows the inter-quartile range of performance. The horizontal line is the median performing school, and the 'whiskers' above and below the boxes show the 5th and 95th percentile ranges. The left hand set of three bars represents the least deprived schools (with under 8% FSM in primary and under 5% FSM in secondary). The set of three bars on the right-hand side represents the most deprived schools with over 50% of their pupils eligible for FSM.

In each group of schools, attainment has risen consistently from 1999, through 2005, to the latest year. But the improvement has been greatest for the more deprived schools (shown to the right hand side of the charts). Chart 4 shows that median attainment at level 4+ in KS2 English tests in the most deprived primary schools has risen by nineteen percentage points compared to a six percentage points increase in the least deprived primary schools.

Chart 4 – Primary schools which serve more deprived pupils have narrowed the attainment gap with schools serving more affluent pupils

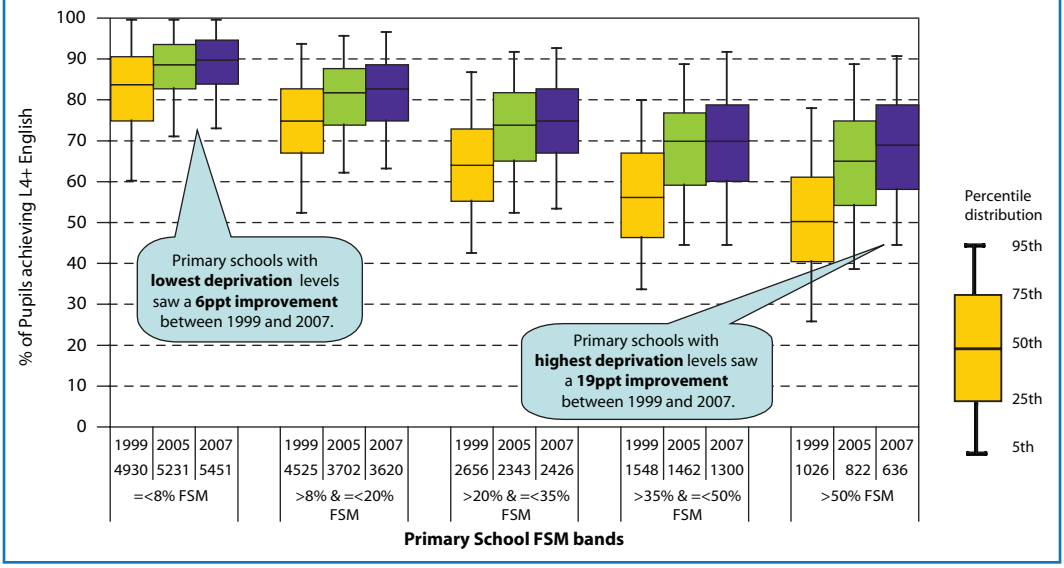
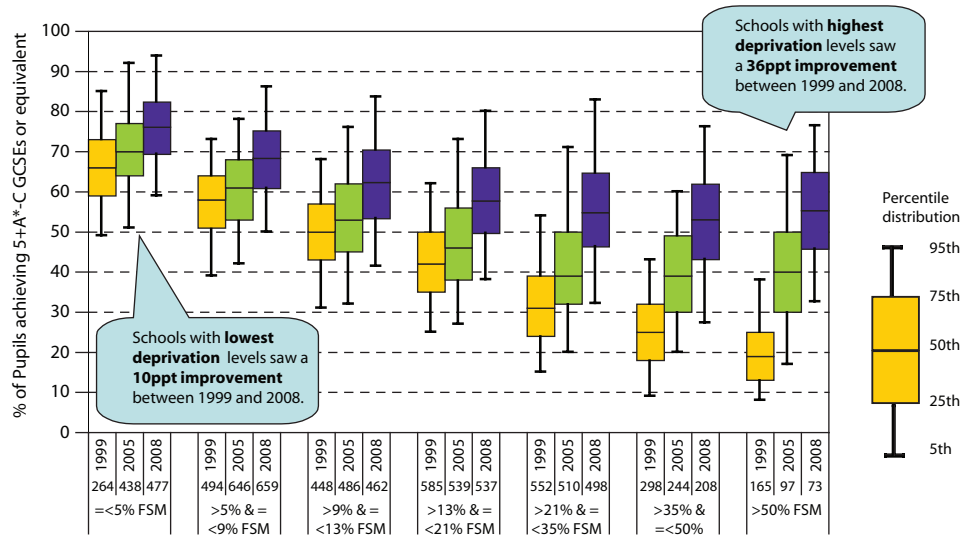


Chart 5 below shows the same pattern in secondary schools using the 5+ A*-C measure where between 1999 and 2008 there was a 36 percentage points increase for the most deprived schools, and 10 percentage points for the least deprived schools. The most deprived schools started further behind but improved more than twice as fast.

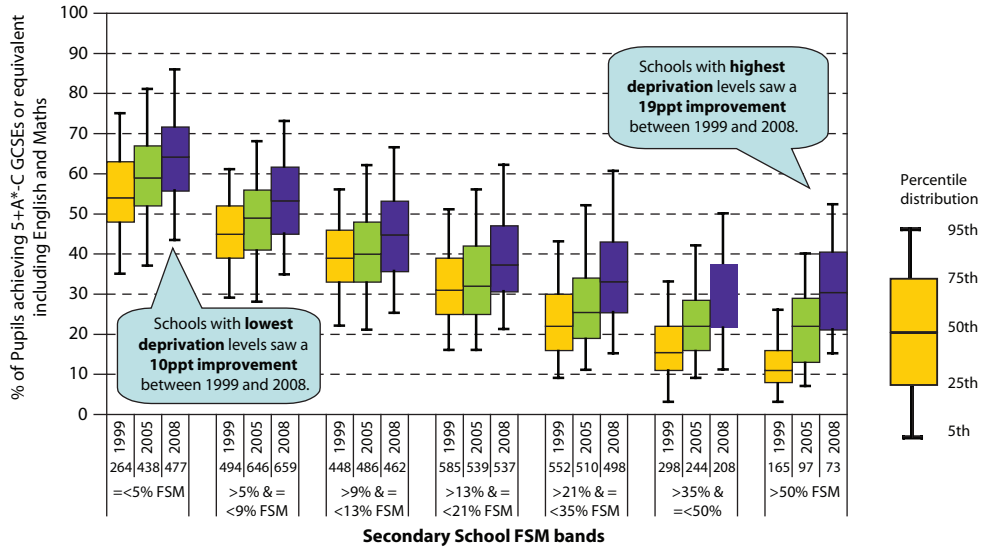
Chart 5 – On the 5+ A*-C measure, the most deprived schools started well behind but have made huge progress in the last ten years



There is something else very important in the above chart that can be seen from the 'whiskers' indicating the range of performance. The highest attaining schools in the group with the highest levels of deprivation are now achieving the same levels of attainment of 5+ A-Cs as average schools in the least deprived group (in other words, the top whisker of the purple bar for the right hand group is now level with the median line of the purple bar of the left hand group). Yet in 1999 (yellow bars) this was far from being true: even the best performing schools in deprived areas were well behind the average for the most affluent areas. In ten years these schools have broken the link between deprivation and attainment.

Chart 6 shows that a similar pattern for secondary schools can be seen when using the more challenging measure, 5+ A*-C including English and maths. The gains may not be as impressive as the 5+ A*-C measure, but the chart again shows that the most deprived schools have improved at the fastest rate – increasing the median attainment by 19 percentage points between 1999 and 2008 compared to a ten percentage point gain in the least deprived schools.

Chart 6 – On 5+ A*-C including English and maths, the most deprived schools have again made the fastest improvement over the last ten years



Further evidence that it is possible for schools to break the link between deprivation and attainment can be found in Ofsted's recent report 'Twelve Outstanding Secondary Schools'[3]. It draws from the practice, experience, and ambition of twelve consistently outstanding maintained community schools which have been judged as outstanding in two or more inspections, serve disproportionately disadvantaged communities, and have exceptionally good results. These are among the very best schools in the country.

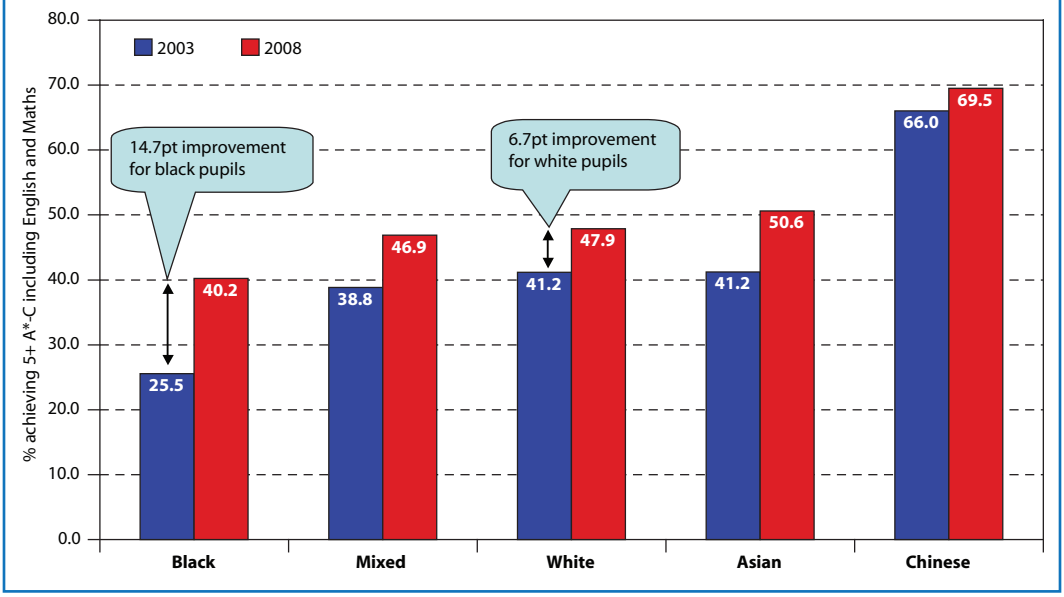
Deprivation presents schools with special challenges. Schools facing high levels of deprivation can't do it on their own, and need support from the whole range of local children's services. They need – and get – additional financial support too. But the experience of the best schools shows that it can be done, and that it has been done.

Underperforming minority ethnic groups have made above average progress

Recent years have also seen big improvements for all the major minority ethnic groups that were previously underperforming. The performance of the major census groups Black, Asian and Mixed has improved faster than the cohort average at both primary and secondary levels over the past five years. At Key Stage 4, as Chart 7 below illustrates, between 2003–08 Black pupils made a 14.7 point gain against the 5ACEM threshold, compared with a 6.7 point gain for the whole cohort, so the gap between their performance and average performance narrowed substantially.

3 http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Twelve-outstanding-secondary-schools-Excelling-against-the-odds

Chart 7 – Black pupils are catching up: since 2003 their GCSE attainment has increased at the fastest rate of any major ethnic group



The reasons for this improvement are complex but they certainly include the emphasis which has been placed on minority ethnic achievement at national, local and school level, through targeted projects led by the National Strategies and delivered by local authorities and schools. But perhaps even more significant is the contribution which local communities themselves have made. The raising of aspirations of parents, families, and pupils and backed up by schools determined not to permit underperformance to continue, has achieved this large improvement in the life chances of many young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Despite this there is still much more to do as absolute achievement for some minority ethnic groups still lags behind the cohort as a whole.

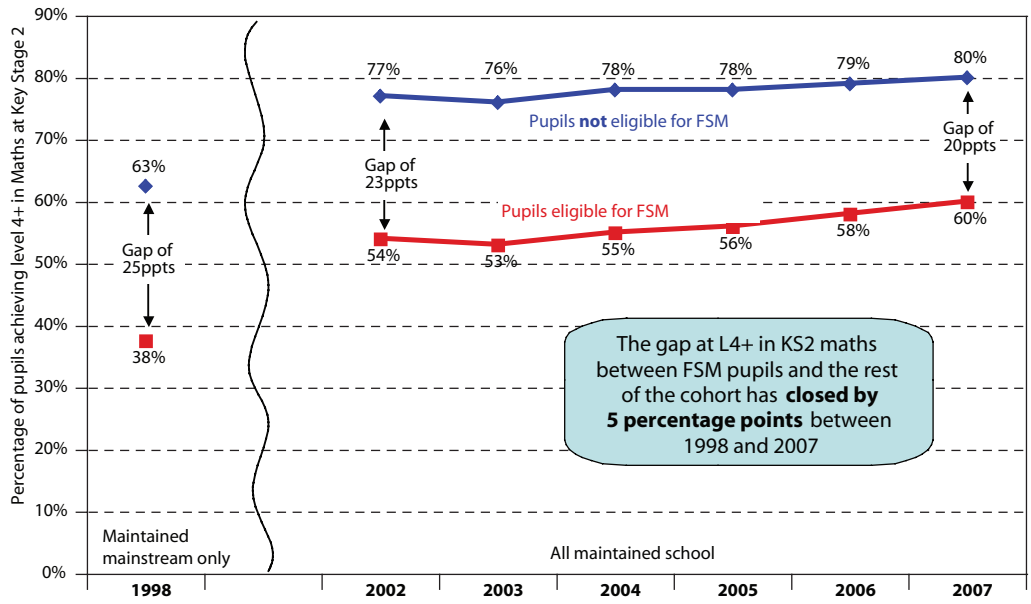
Disadvantaged pupils have made big gains, but there is still a strong link between disadvantage and achievement

Both FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils have made significant gains at both primary and secondary school in recent years.

The attainment of FSM pupils has improved strongly since 1997. An estimated 20,000 more FSM pupils now achieve the expected standard at age 11 in maths than ten years ago, and over 16,000 more in English. In maths their chances of success have increased from 38% in 1998 to 60% in 2007; and from 45% to 62% in English.

It is also important to look at the gap in attainment between FSM pupils and the rest of the cohort. Chart 8 below show KS2 performance in maths for pupils eligible for FSM and the rest of the cohort. It shows some encouraging progress, with the gap narrowing by five percentage points in maths over the past nine years; in English the equivalent gap has narrowed by three percentage points. However, the chart also shows that this gap remains large.

Chart 8 – In KS2 maths the gap between FSM pupils and the rest of the cohort has narrowed by 5 percentage points



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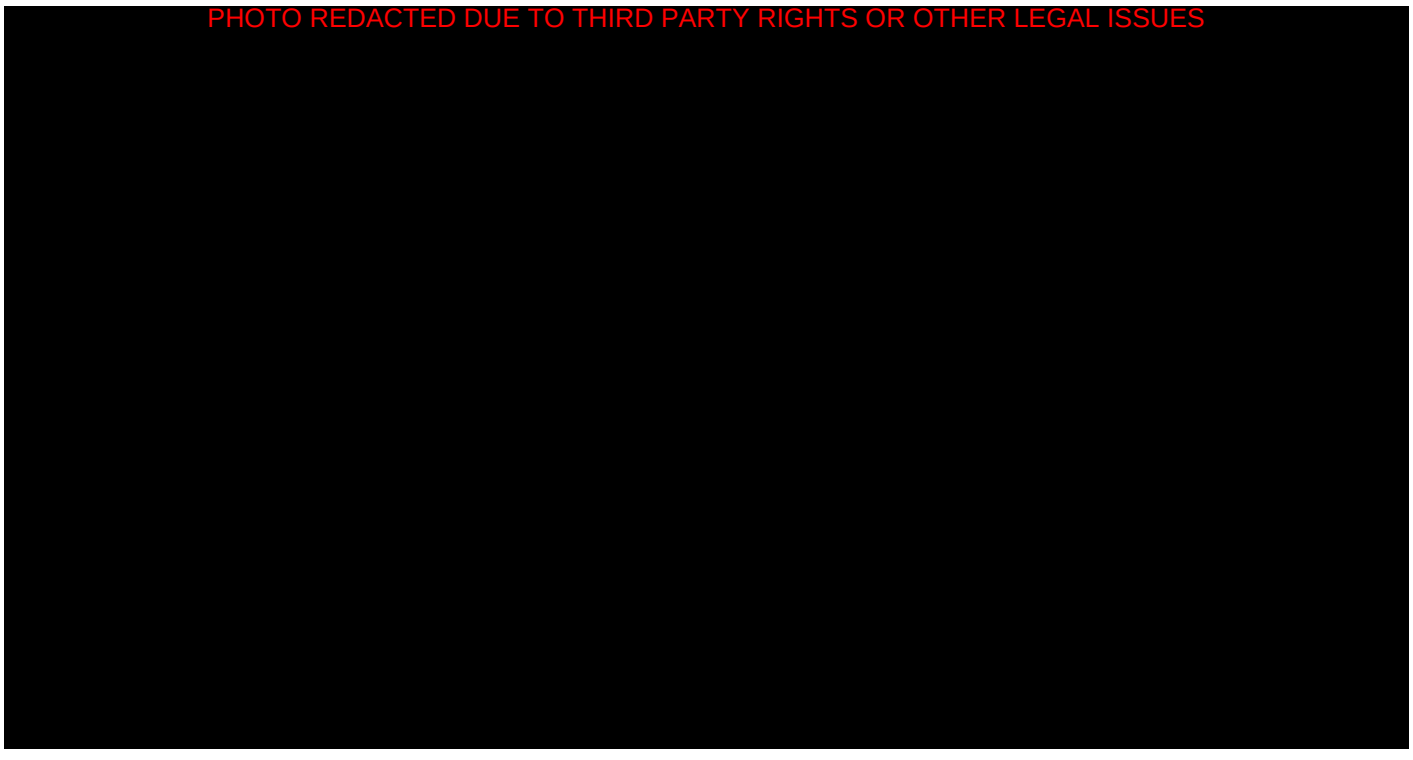
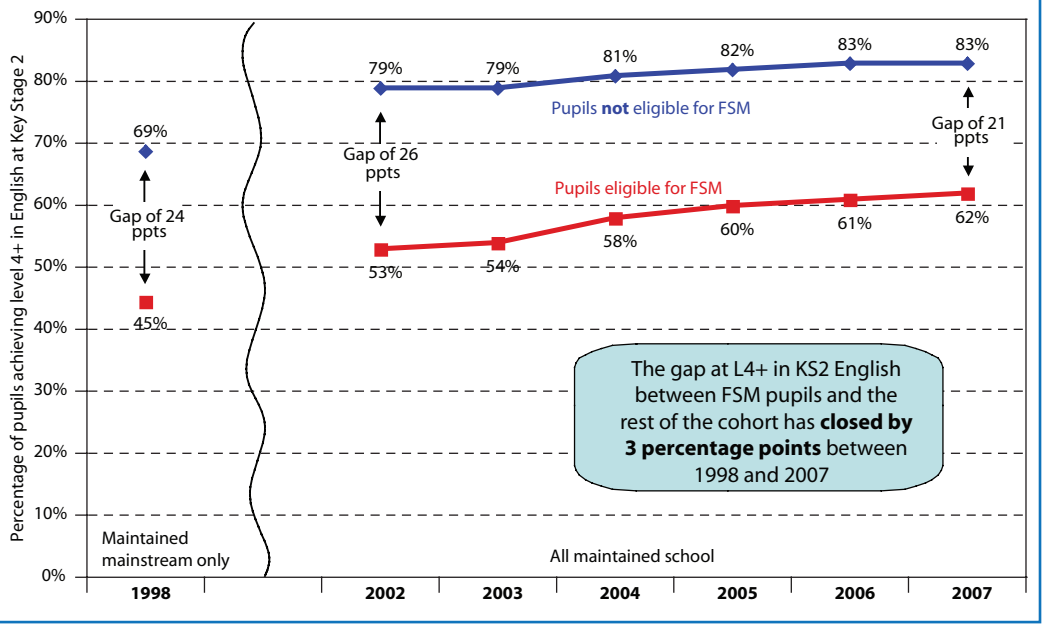
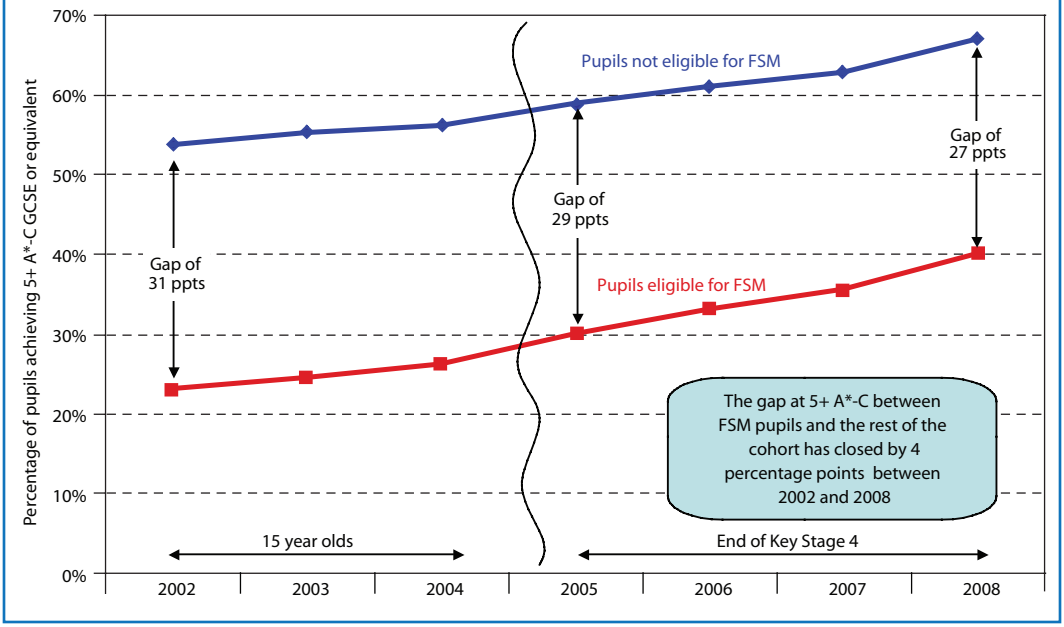


Chart 9 – The same is true for KS2 English – the gap between FSM pupils and the rest of the cohort has narrowed by 3 percentage points



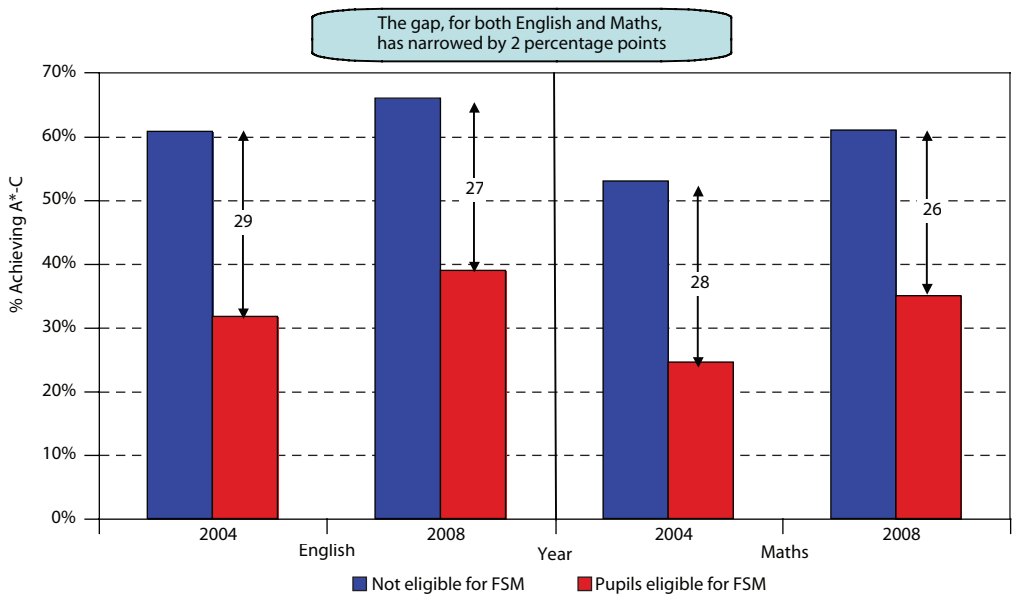
A similar pattern can be seen at Key Stage 4 (Chart 10 below), where the gap between the achievement of FSM pupils and the rest of the cohort of 5+ GCSE or equivalents at A*-C has narrowed by four percentage points from 31 percentage points in 2002 to 27 points in 2008.

Chart 10 – In secondary schools (using 5+ A*-C) the gap between FSM pupils and the rest of the cohort has narrowed by 4 percentage points since 2004



This narrowing of the gap is similarly repeated at GCSE subject level, as shown by chart 11. In GCSE English and in GCSE maths the proportion of FSM pupils achieving grade A*-C has increased at a faster rate than the rest of the cohort, with the gap narrowing in both subjects by two percentage points since 2004. In maths the chances of an FSM pupil achieving A*-C have risen from 25% in 2004 to 35% in 2008; and from 32% to 39% in English.

Chart 11 – In the key GCSE subjects of English and maths FSM pupils are narrowing the gap



The chances of an FSM pupil achieving the more challenging measure of 5+ A*-C including English and maths has increased from under 15% in 2002 to 23.5% in 2008. Despite this increase of over eight percentage points there has been little gap narrowing.

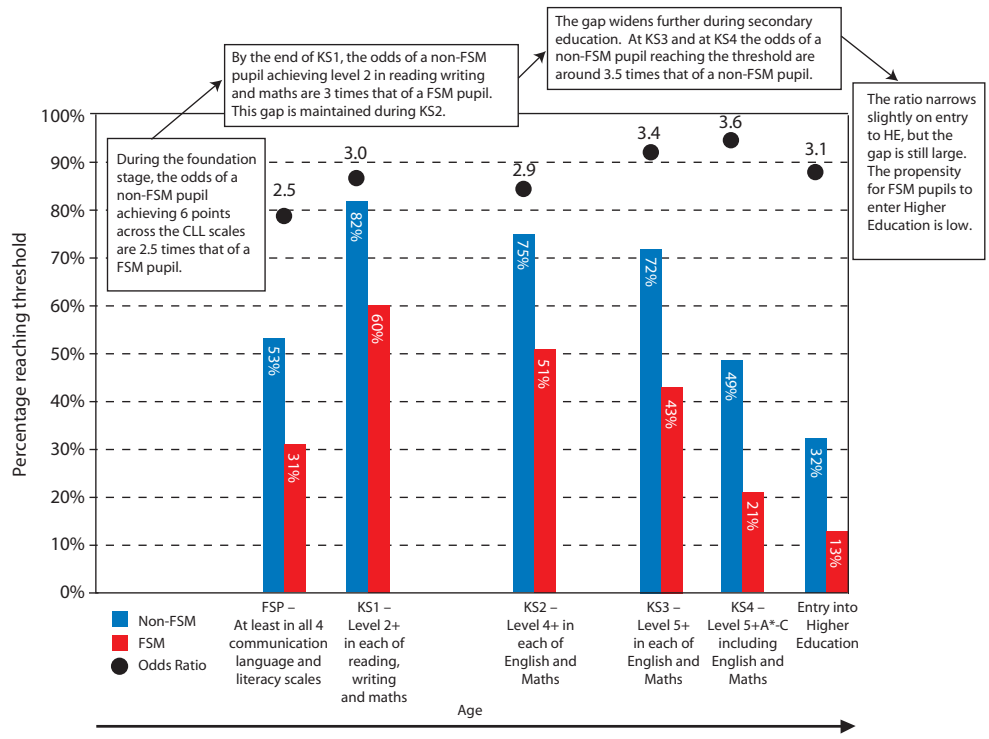
Disadvantaged pupils fall behind from the early years

The social class gap in attainment opens up by 22 month. Chart 12 below illustrates that an FSM child has around 3 times worse odds of achieving good school outcomes than a non-FSM child at every critical point in their education after age 5.

The chart shows the outcome of FSM and non-FSM pupils at six stages: Foundation Stage, end of Key Stage 1, end of Key Stage 2, end of Key Stage 3, at GCSE and entry into Higher Education (HE). For each of the six stages there are a pair of bars: the blue bar represents the outcome for pupils who are not eligible for FSM, and the red bar – which is always below the level of the blue bar – shows the outcome for pupils eligible for FSM.

The black dot above each pair of bars shows the odds of an FSM pupil achieving the expected standard for their age in comparison to a pupil not eligible for FSM. The best odds of an FSM pupil achieving the expected standard occur in the Foundation Stage, and even then the odds are that they are two and a half times less likely to achieve it than the more affluent pupils. The odds for FSM pupils worsen at the end of Key Stage 1 and remain stable at about three times less likely to achieve the expected standard in Key Stage 2 and through to age 19.

Chart 12 – The odds of FSM pupils achieving are three times less than the rest of the cohort from early years through to university



So the major challenge is to continue making good progress overall, but to do more to break the link at each stage between family disadvantage and attainment.

3. Why disadvantaged pupils progress less well at school

For most pupils school is a rich and rewarding experience, but it is an uncomfortable fact that at every ability level in the system, pupils from poor backgrounds achieve less well than their counterparts. The reasons are complex, and not purely linked to money. Of course, absolute levels of poverty may mean children suffer from poor housing or an inadequate diet. But, even in families above the poverty line, parents may be sceptical about the value of education and not see that success at school is important for their children.

There is much that can be done to support schools to address these issues. But real progress in breaking the link between deprivation and low educational attainment relies most of all on the leadership of every teacher in every school, and on their ability to transmit their own passion for transforming opportunity.

Early years and the home

Even when children are very young, the link between cognitive development and family deprivation is already apparent. For example, research[4] has identified significant gaps in developmental tasks have opened up at 22 months, and the Millennium Cohort Study shows lower vocabulary at age three for children from poorer households. Investment in early years services for children and families such as Sure Start and free nursery education will address these early gaps, and specific new interventions including "Every Child A Talker" are designed to tackle some of the key issues.

Nevertheless, children may not experience the benefits at home which more advantaged children take for granted, for example access to a wide range of books or educational software. Parents want to help their children succeed, but do not necessarily know the best way to do this[5]. We are providing targeted support, for example through promoting family reading and seeking to help parents who may themselves have had a poor experience of schools not to pass on those negative perceptions to their children.

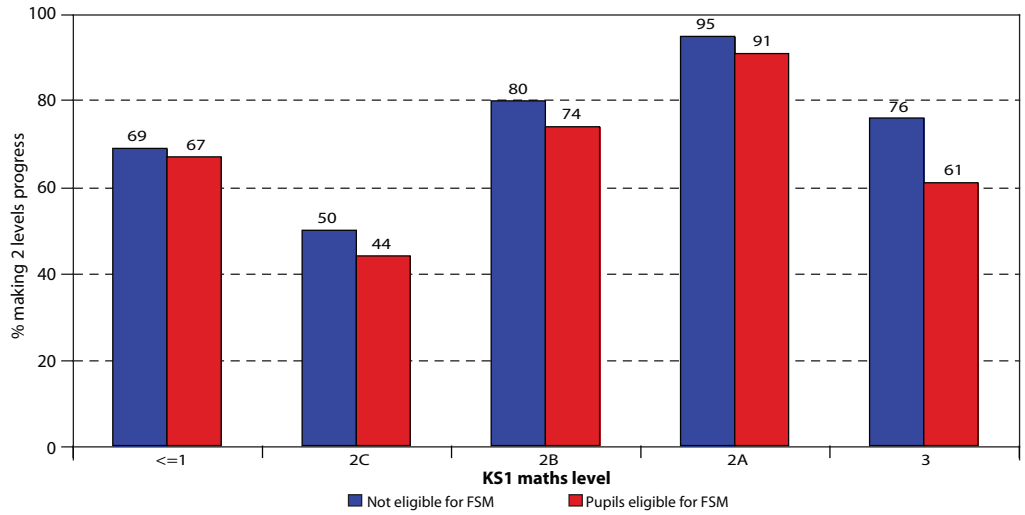
4 Feinstein (2003) 'Inequality in the Early Cognitive Development of British Children in the 1970 Cohort', *Economica* 70, pp. 73–97

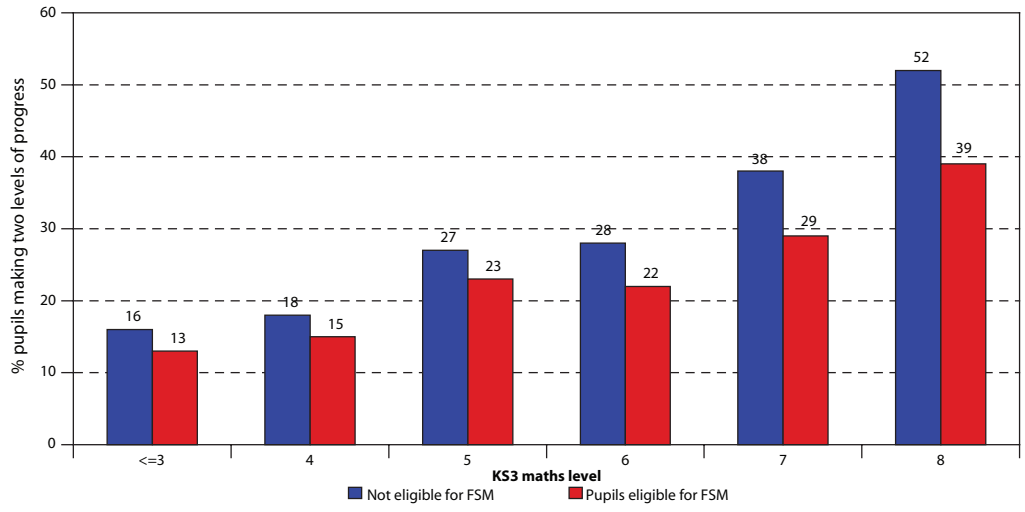
5 See Jim Knight's speech to SSAT Nov 2008 http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/speeches 27/11/08 SSAT Annual Conference

In the classroom

When children start school already behind their peers, this can set up a continuing cycle of under-performance. They find it hard to keep up and so may learn more slowly, hence falling even further behind. Disadvantaged pupils make slower progress than others. No matter what their starting point, disadvantaged pupils are less likely to make two levels of progress between key stages than their more advantaged peers with the same prior attainment. The size of the progress gap differs by prior attainment band. Low attaining disadvantaged pupils typically find it slightly harder to catch up if they fall behind; and high attaining ones typically find it **much** harder to excel. This is why the personalisation approach focuses so strongly on rates of progress, and on all pupils making good progress regardless of the level from which they start.

Charts 13 and 14: Whatever level of attainment they start from, disadvantaged pupils currently make slower progress than their more affluent peers in primary and secondary schools





The best way to ensure that pupils progress regularly is to ensure they never fall behind. The Making Good Progress Pilot is demonstrating what can be achieved through rigorous assessment of pupils' performance, locking children into learning rather than playing catch-up. All schools will receive funding from April for personalisation including one-to-one tuition to support pupils arriving in KS2 and KS3 below expectations and struggling to catch up with their peers. Early evidence shows that one-to-one tuition is accelerating the progress of the least advantaged pupils – children in care, children on FSM, children with SEN – who, in some cases, will never before have experienced the concentrated attention of an adult determined to help them to improve. A reformed curriculum and new qualifications will also motivate and excite many young people not yet switched on by learning.

Teachers

The most disadvantaged children need and deserve the best teachers. In the New Opportunities White Paper we announced a package of measures to attract teachers to work in challenging inner-city schools, and we have also announced an expansion of Teach First. But this is not just about attracting new people into the profession, it is also about deployment of teachers within a school. Hobbs (2003) found that the quality of teaching and learning in bottom groups contributed to low achievement and low expectations. Where senior leaders are making a difference for all children, they ensure their strongest teachers spend most of their teaching time where they can have greatest impact – often in the lower sets. And they will make sure that practice in the classroom means that skilled teachers focus their efforts on accelerating the progress of those who are struggling.

Ofsted's recent report *Twelve outstanding secondary schools: excelling against the odds*[6] examines the elements that have contributed to their success. It is no surprise that they all have in common well-distributed leadership and outstanding teaching. They also tend to have stable staffing, being successful at attracting, recruiting and retaining staff. Several of the schools are also National Leaders of Education, thus helping spread change throughout the system. Ofsted note that the leaders are driven by a moral purpose, wanting to see other schools' pupils succeed as well as their own. NCSL's report on "Successful leadership for promoting the achievement of white working-class pupils" contains similar messages reinforcing the leadership characteristics associated with success in challenging schools.

6 http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Twelve-outstanding-secondary-schools-Excelling-against-the-odds

Behaviour

Pupils eligible for FSM are seven times more likely to be permanently excluded from primary school than those who are not eligible, and three and a half times as likely to be permanently excluded from secondary school. Sir Alan Steer has been conducting a comprehensive Behaviour Review for the Department, and in February 2009 presented the fourth in his series of reports highlighting the need for school behaviour policies to be set in the context of policies on learning and teaching. The links between poor behaviour and low attainment are not straightforward, but if pupils are failing to keep up in lessons they can become bored and disruptive, preferring to gain notoriety amongst their friends than admit they do not understand something. Expressing emotion can be a cultural taboo, especially for boys. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds sometimes do not have the skills or self-confidence to deal with criticism or set-backs, which may make them more likely to express denial or to respond negatively and inappropriately when challenged. Programmes such as SEAL address this by helping pupils develop self-belief and to manage conflict.

Outside influences

Aspiration is a key issue: what do young people want to do with their lives, and do they understand how to achieve that? At puberty, the influence of peer groups becomes much stronger which can create a culture of it being "not cool to learn". Recent research by Cabinet Office has shown a significant disparity in aspirations, with young people from traditional working-class communities showing less ambition than more recently arrived groups. An inter-generational pattern of worklessness can lead to insularity and low horizons. Schools can begin to change this by providing access to positive role-models from similar backgrounds with whom young people can identify. Schools can also provide a range of experiences, in arts, sport or community volunteering, which gives children a glimpse into other worlds and helps them to find something they can succeed at. And schools are making sure that they all have productive links to business and to Universities, so that young people learn early what is possible for them and are motivated to take advantage of the opportunities.

Schools can make a much wider contribution to a community. We know less about the influence of communities on children than we do about the importance of the immediate family, and this is something the "Inspiring Communities" pathfinders announced in the New Opportunities White Paper will address. Schools themselves can have a significant effect on local culture: those which succeed in the most disadvantaged areas respect the local community, employing local people wherever possible, but insistng upon high standards and expectations for everyone.

Schools cannot do this in isolation. We know that teachers, particularly in disadvantaged areas, often spend a lot of time dealing with pupils' and parents' wider problems. Extended services can make a big difference: having integrated health and social care on school sites means that problems getting in the way of children's learning can be more easily dealt with.

Over 15,500 schools (72%) across the country now offer access to extended services, and all schools are expected to do so by 2010. While awareness of and satisfaction with services among parents is relatively high, the challenge remains to ensure that particularly disadvantaged groups participate and make use of the offer.

In particular, children from relatively deprived families are a little less likely to have used activities and childcare than their peers and these families are less likely to state that the offer meets their needs. The data shows there is a participation gap between FSM eligible pupils and those not eligible, with non FSM showing typically a 10% higher participation rate. This shows that, whilst a good start has been made in enabling disadvantaged children to participate in high quality after school activities, more needs to be done to maximise the benefits these activities can bring to children's engagement with learning. For example, schools need to do more to consult and actively involve children and parents in designing the package of activities which will engage them best, whilst exploring and tackling other barriers to their participation, such as transport difficulties or attitudes.

To ensure that cost of activities does not act as a barrier for participation of the most disadvantaged pupils, we are rolling out the extended schools subsidy, worth £265m over the current spending period. This is designed to provide funding to clusters of schools to ensure that the most disadvantaged children can take part in activities of their choosing.

Wider opportunities

Ensuring the curriculum is relevant and engaging is, of course, important for all pupils but especially those who have not been well served by the traditional curriculum. The new Diplomas, with their mix of theoretical and practical learning, give an opportunity to motivate pupils and demonstrate the relevance of education to what they want to do in their lives. Many schools are exploring how to improve the match between the basic curriculum and the needs and aspirations of their pupils, extending the range of curricular pathways where possible. They also take every chance to celebrate success, so that pupils can see that they are making progress and have tangible, realistic goals to work towards.

Our 14-19 Qualifications Strategy is designed to ensure that there is a high quality learning route accessible for all young people, whatever their talents and aspirations. We are streamlining the current qualifications so that all young learners have a choice between four nationally available

learning routes: GCSE and A-Level; the Diploma; Apprenticeships; and the Foundation Learning Tier Progression Pathways. These are broad and flexible programmes of study which offer different types of learning that are appropriate for different learners – from those wishing to follow a traditional academic programme, to those who have a clear idea about the occupation they want to train for. For example, apprenticeships (programmes of learning completed in the workplace) enable young people to 'earn while they learn', thus breaking through any financial barriers to further study and, through the relationship with an employer, providing a direct route into the world of work. The range of apprenticeships has increased considerably in recent years. We are expanding these opportunities even further so that apprenticeships are a recognised, high quality mainstream education and training option with clear entry and progression routes.

Links to SEN and other additional needs

An FSM child is also more likely to have been identified with special educational needs (SEN). There is a very large overlap between FSM status and either having a statement of SEN or being categorised as School Action Plus. An FSM child may also come from one of the minority ethnic groups that underperform compared to the rest of the cohort. There is often an interaction effect between these factors. The interventions which will help a child to succeed are likely to be very similar in each case – a clear assessment of where they are starting from, personalised learning to make sure they have the basic educational and personal skills in place, a rigorous approach to tracking their progress, high aspirations and stretching, relevant targets.

All of this demonstrates why pupils from deprived backgrounds are likely to underperform, and explains why schools should identify and closely monitor the progress of their FSM pupils. The evidence is clear: given two pupils on the same level of attainment who are both performing below expectations, the child from the deprived background is more likely to fall behind.

Later in this document we discuss planned changes to the accountability framework to encourage a more rounded view of the factors affecting children's achievement.

Symptoms, issues and responses

The chart below summarises the main symptoms and causes of the atttainment gap for disadvantaged pupils, and the strategies which schools and local authorities can adopt to address them:

Why do disadvantaged children progress less well?	
Some symptoms and issues	**Possible school and LA responses**
Cognitive gaps already evident before age 5	Children's Centres, support for families and early reading
Weaker home learning environment	Schools working closely with parents
Lower prior attainment at each Key Stage	Personalisation, progress, 'keep up not catch-up'
Harder to recover from stalled learning	Tracking, early intervention, one-to-one tuition
Quality of teaching for children in lower sets	In-school teacher deployment, training
Behaviour, exclusion and absence issues	Behaviour, exclusion and absence policies, SEAL, new curriculum
Aspirations, peer influences, "not cool to learn"	Positive role-models, active information, advice and guidance policies
Weak family/community networks	School/cluster/LA action to compensate
Narrow experiences and opportunities	Broader curriculum; extended school services
SEN/disadvantage overlap	Ensure SEN policies focus on progress
Gaps are too often an "invisible issue"	Use new accountability framework

The effects of disadvantage are cumulative and pervasive because poor pupils typically make slower progress than pupils with similar attainment from more affluent backgrounds.

To weaken the link between disadvantage and achievement we must continue to raise attainment overall, **and** accelerate the rate of progress made by the lowest performers. And at the same time we must focus resources on children from disadvantaged backgrounds because without extra help and support they will fall even further behind.

This is not an impossible task. Schools in London and elsewhere are already showing impressive rates of improvement for children from deprived backgrounds. Nor does it require a whole new pedagogy or approach. Repeated examples show that what really makes a difference is the consistency with which schools engage all their pupils, always being determined to go the extra mile to help them to achieve.

4. Breaking the link in every school

Breaking the link between disadvantage and attainment means securing good progress for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, wherever these pupils are found. Part of this strategy will involve focusing on particular areas and schools where there is concentrated disadvantage, but a very important part of it will mean securing better progress for disadvantaged pupils in schools which are **not** serving particularly disadvantaged communities.

We must continue addressing disadvantage where it is concentrated in particular areas and schools

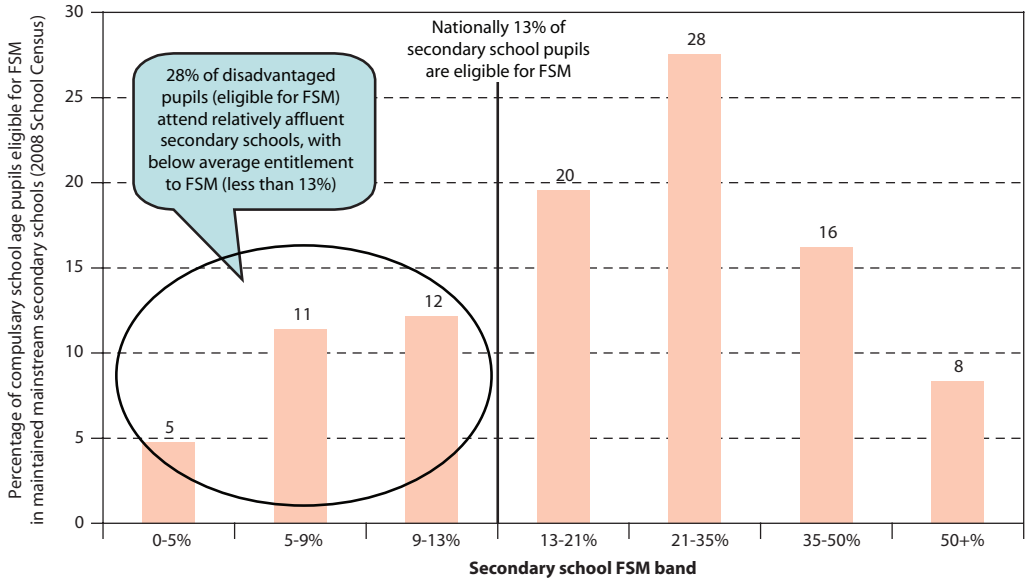
As the data shows, we have seen encouraging success at the area and school level. One such example is in London, where gaps have narrowed and average results have improved very significantly over the last five years. In 2002 5ACEM attainment in London was 39%, below the national figure of 40%; in 2008 that had reversed and London attainment of 51% exceeded the national figure of 48%. The most disadvantaged pupils in London also very significantly outperform those nationally: in 2008 33.8% of FSM pupils in London achieved 5ACEM compared to 23.5% of FSM pupils nationally.

We are building on the successes of many schools in London and elsewhere in launching the National Challenge, which aims to raise achievement in the secondary schools with the lowest results, so that all schools in England will achieve at least 30% 5ACEM by 2011. We are making a major targeted investment of £400m to raise performance in the secondary schools, spread all over the country, where average attainment and progress are below this minimum benchmark. Their numbers have fallen from 1600 in 1997 to just 440 now. The extra investment will support those schools to set and achieve even higher ambitions for their pupils, by providing school leadership teams and teachers with the tools and support to make long lasting change. Many of the schools that have now moved securely above the 30% threshold have relatively disadvantaged intakes, proving deprivation need not be a barrier. The National Challenge programme aims not only to ensure that all communities have schools where results are good, but also to raise achievement in some schools where disadvantage is concentrated.

But disadvantaged pupils are not only found in disadvantaged schools

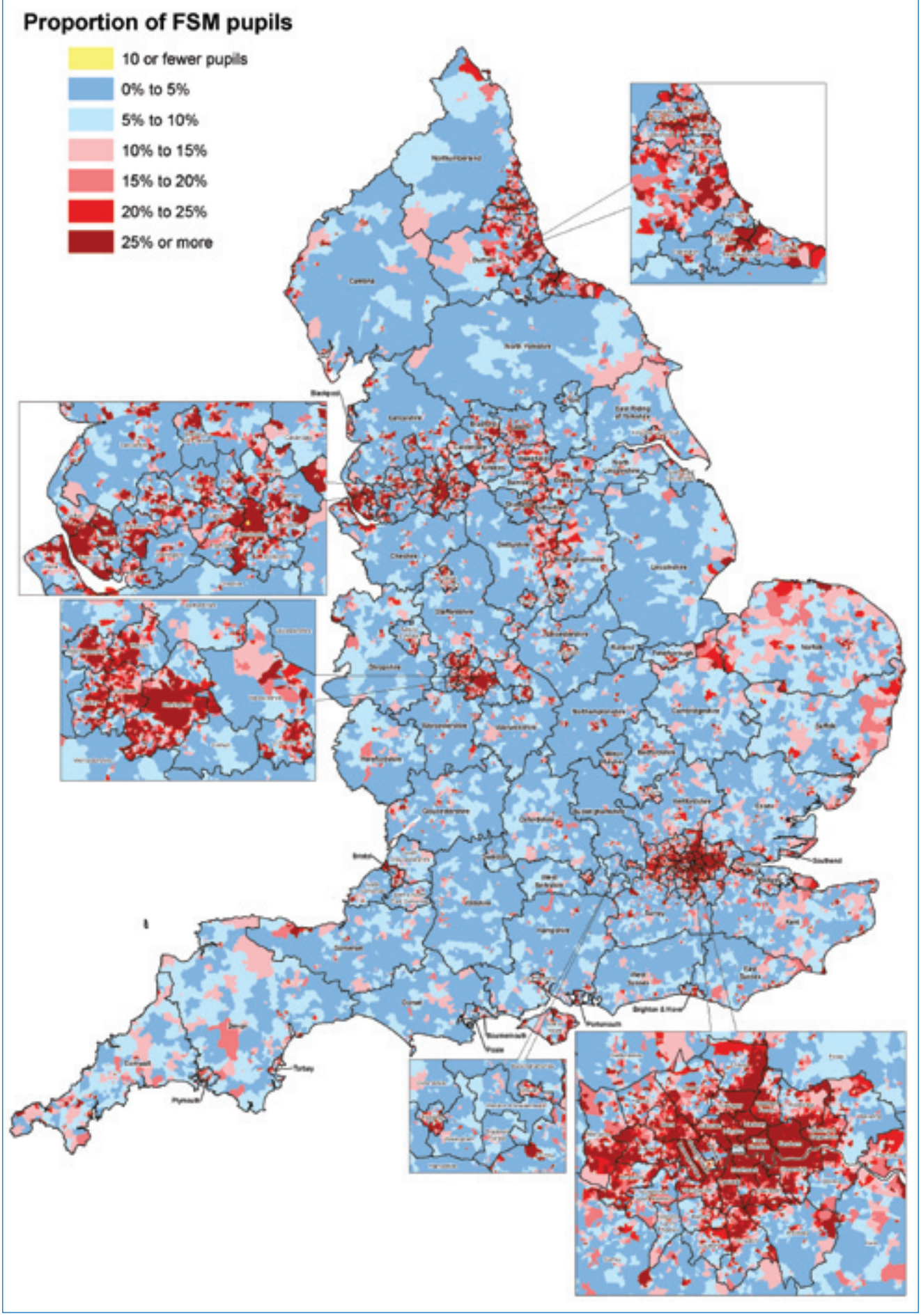
Disadvantaged pupils are more likely to be concentrated in primary schools with high FSM proportions; this is less true in secondary schools. About half (48%) of pupils entitled to FSM are to be found in the third of schools with greatest concentration of disadvantage, and the other half are spread across the other two thirds of schools. And as the chart below shows, nearly a third (28%) are in schools with below average deprivation. So to break the link between deprivation and attainment, it will also be essential for schools which have less deprived intakes than average to secure good progress for their deprived pupils.

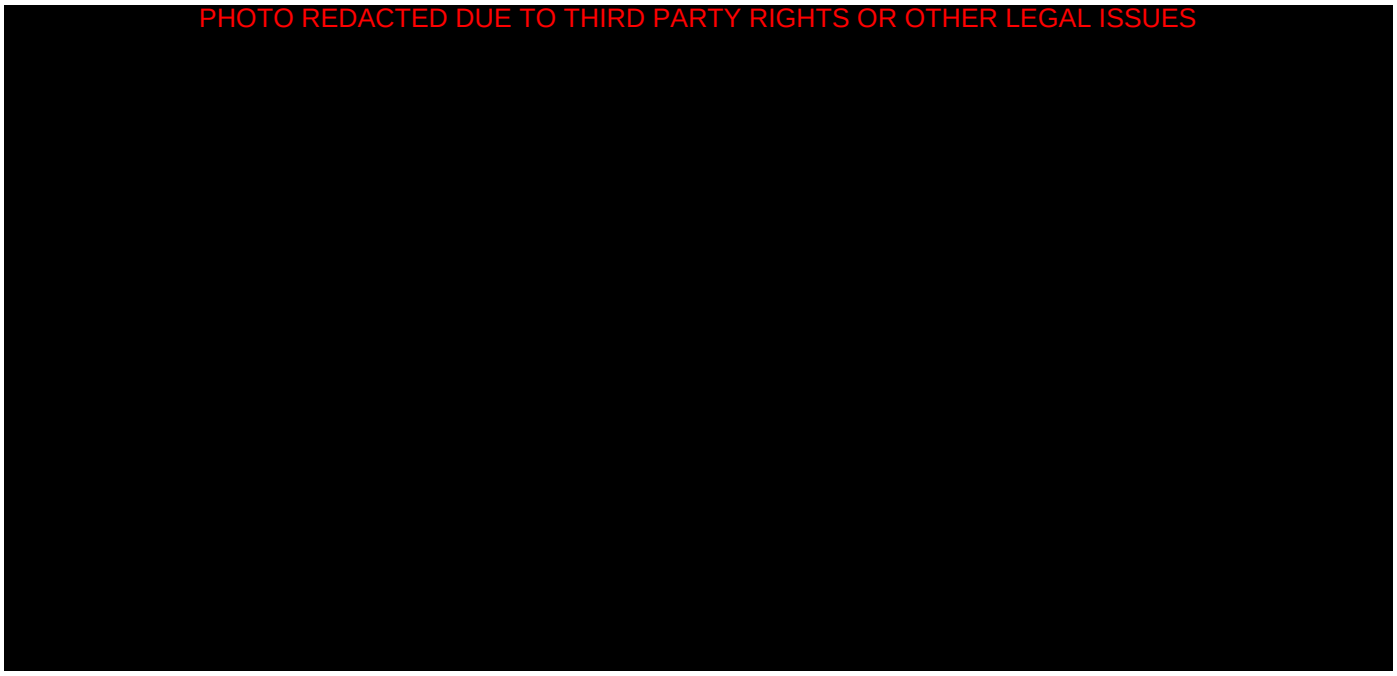
Chart 15 – 28% of FSM and secondary pupils attend schools with below-average FSM numbers



Poor children don't only, or even mainly, live or go to school in deprived areas. They are dispersed across the whole country. The map opposite shows FSM distribution by the smallest available geographical area comprising approximately 1,500 inhabitants. It shows a much greater dispersal with pockets of deprivation even in areas which are otherwise relatively affluent. This map highlights that FSM children are found just about everywhere, and that the issue is therefore one for every head and every school.

Chart 16 – FSM children are widely dispersed

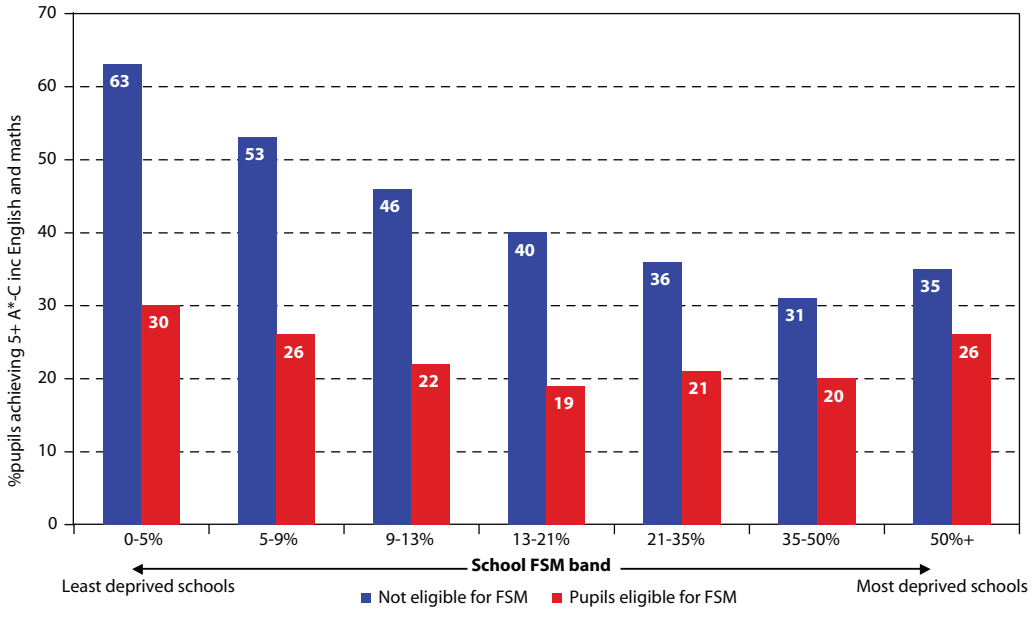




The relative gap in performance between FSM and non-FSM children is greatest in the least deprived schools

Chart 17 below shows that in the least deprived schools the 5ACEM gap is 36 percentage points, whereas in the schools where over half their pupils are eligible for FSM it is only 9 percentage points.

Chart 17: The relative gap in performance between FSM and non-FSM children is greatest in the least deprived schools



This analysis shows that there is an important job to do in schools with relatively small numbers of deprived pupils. Such pupils may do well compared to deprived pupils in other areas and other parts of the country. But the relative gap with other pupils in the same area and school is large. Schools which actively track this gap often find that simply being aware of it is the most important step towards addressing it. Some schools are already succeeding in narrowing it, and case studies from these are included in the next section of this document. The Extra Mile schools which began their trial work last September have also addressed the issues across the whole range of their work, from admissions and transitions, classroom teaching and homework, sport and recreation, and relations with the parents and families. The problem is common to all schools, even though the solutions may be individual.

So we need a strategy for gap-narrowing that works in every school

Building on the December publication of '21st Century Schools: A World-Class Education for Every Child' we will publish a White Paper, later in the spring, which will set out how we will create a system within which the individual needs of pupils and their families shape the services which are provided by schools and the wider system of children's services. In this system:

- Schools will set high aspirations for all children, will focus on the engagement of pupils in learning, will monitor their progress closely and will work to identify early and address barriers to achievement.

  This will include tailoring learning experiences to children's needs, for example through use of group or one-to-one work; ensuring that every child has someone within the school who knows them well and is able to support their development and decision-making; and working to effectively engage parents and carers to support children's learning and development.

- School staff will be able to identify children and young people's additional needs and will know how to access the required support, either within the school, from a partner school, or from wider services for children and young people within the Children's Trust.

  Schools will have staff members with the capacity to investigate issues and, where appropriate, make formal assessments of needs; and with strong links to wider local children's services, for example through local multi-agency arrangements, which will enable them to access specialist services where needed.

  Schools will exercise a strong voice on the local Children's Trust, which will ensure that services are coordinated and integrated around children's needs. Legislation currently before Parliament would give schools a place on Children's Trust Boards and would give schools a greater opportunity to inform and influence the Children and Young People's Plan in each local area and the way that services are commissioned and configured.

- Schools will work in partnership with each other and with wider children's services to share expertise and to ensure a wide and engaging offer to children, young people and families.

  Schools will be able to provide a wider, more engaging curriculum offer and will be able to access more specialist teaching through working together in partnership and sharing resources. And, similarly, pupils will benefit from school staff engaging in high quality collaborative professional development, which will enable them to extend and exchange expertise and effective practice, including strategies for narrowing gaps.

- Resources in the system will be deployed to best effect to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

  The current review of the distribution of the Dedicated Schools Grant will consider how to put in place a funding system which better reflects need, and to give schools greater flexibility to meet the learning and development needs of all their pupils, including those who need extra services and support if they are to reach their full potential.

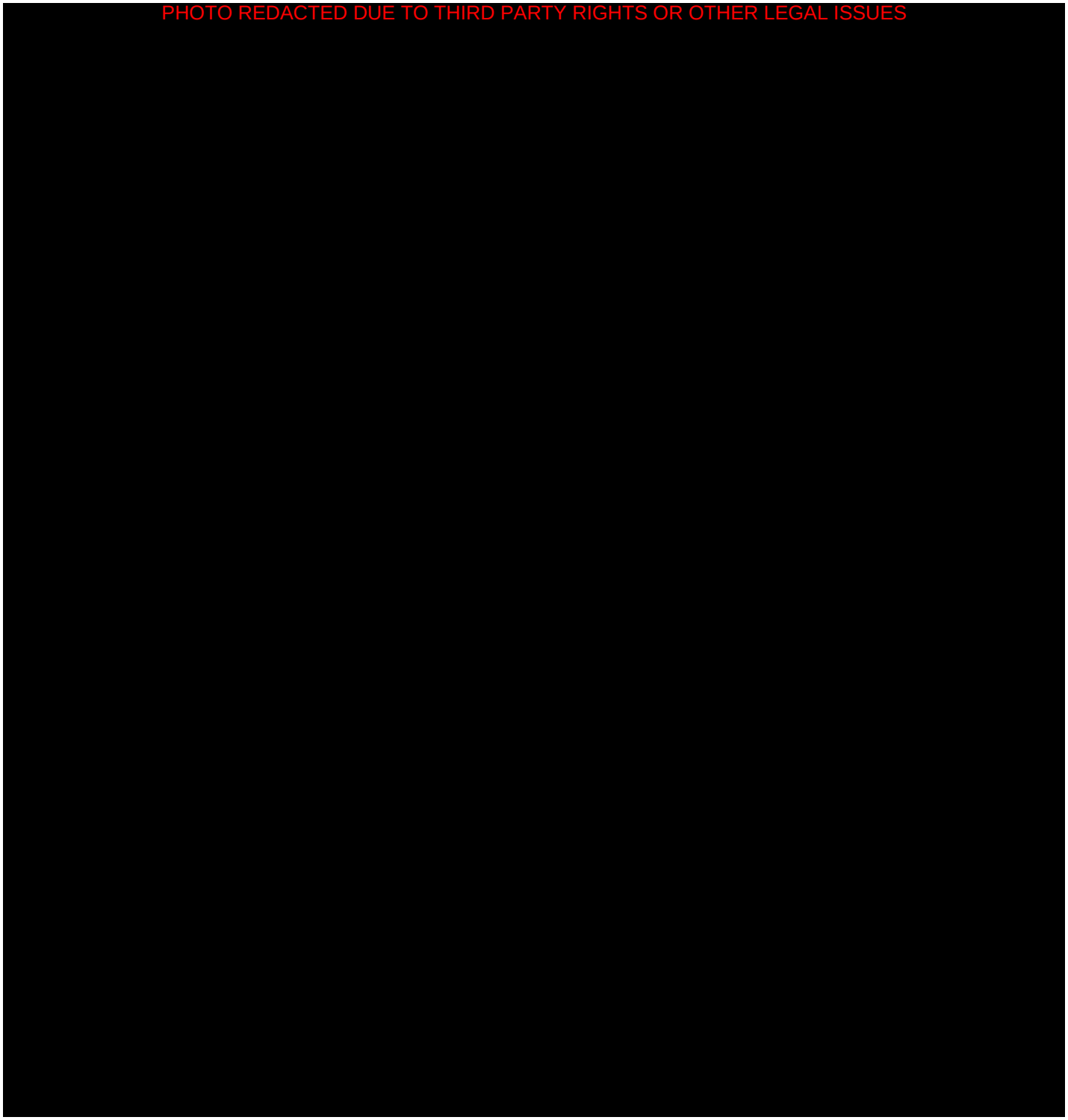
- The accountability system will give schools stronger incentives to reduce variances, narrow gaps and achieve good progress for all pupils

  Members of the school workforce have an over-riding motivation, namely to make a difference to the life chances of young people. For many there is a particular driver: to lift the aspirations and achievement of disadvantaged children, and hence contribute to a fairer and more equal society.

  Through the introduction of the new School Report Card, we aim to reward this motivation to see every child make good progress. We intend to put in place a system which encourages and recognises schools for the progress and achievements of all pupils rather than just their average or borderline pupils, or those who will be easiest to help to progress, while leaving weaker or more disadvantaged pupils to struggle or disengage from learning.

  The School Report Card will recognise schools' achievement across a wider range of outcomes than the accountability system has done hitherto. It will focus not only on averages of academic attainment across the cohort, but also on the progress of all pupils; on narrowing the gaps between different groups of children and young people; on working in partnership; and on achievement across all five ECM outcomes. The School Report Card and other elements of the accountability system will challenge but also support schools to have regard to this wider set of outcomes.

Our spring White Paper will set out proposals for a refocused accountability system. It will be accompanied by further consultation on how it could help schools focus on all pupils – not just those close to a borderline, but those currently well below or well above it; thus narrowing gaps in attainment, delivering to every child's full potential at all ranges of ability and attainment, and recognising the contribution schools make across the full range of children's development.



5. Breaking the link – a priority for national, local and school action

In developing a strategy for breaking the link between deprivation and attainment we need to build on what is already happening successfully and bring out the elements which work most effectively.

From the evidence, analysis and front-line experience which is reflected in the preceding sections, we have developed a framework for structured approach at school and local level. It is based on five broad areas of action – as shown in the illustration below. Over the coming months we intend to develop this framework, in consultation with schools and LAs.

Chart 18 – Framework for school and LA action

Raising visibility and awareness	Headteachers/school leaders to ensure staff take special note of disadvantaged/other vulnerable pupils, and target and track their progress
Early years, parents	Ensure that EY services, and school support for parents, target disadvantage. Focus on home/school interface (eg homework, reading, resources).
Targeted support in basics	Ensure teachers know and intervene early for FSM pupils (eg 1:1 tuition). Consider redeployment of teachers to support pupils with lowest attainment.
Beyond classroom – extended school and other services; post 16	Broaden pupils' experiences, raise aspirations, address linked issues (health etc). Use extended services, and lessons from Extra Mile project, to target disadvantage.
School and LA accountability and funding	Use external and self-evalutation to focus on gaps and progress, not just average attainment. Consider deployment of extra resources where most effective.

We have looked at what is happening in the most effective schools and local authorities, and gathered case studies of some of the most innovative practice. In doing so we have found that there emerged a natural framework for action, breaking into five main headings as in the chart, and we have organised the case studies using the same headings:

Raising visibility and awareness

The first step to addressing under-performance is to recognise where it exists, and to consider likely causes. This requires schools to identify and track individual pupil progress, recognising that certain groups of students face similar challenges. Collaboration with feeder schools and LA services can help prevent gaps ever emerging.

Henry Compton School (Fulham) has prioritised the early identification of Y6 SEN pupils at feeder primaries. An LA-funded transition learning mentor works with the feeder schools, collecting relevant data to develop a transition and learning profile. Literacy and numeracy are prioritised. Before the pupil transfers the new tutor already has CAT scores, observation notes, resilience profiles and personalised timetables. A KS3 nurture group is provided for those most at risk. External input from support agencies including speech and language therapy, EPS lesson support and CAMHS services is available. The impact on pupils is remarkable: in a school with 29% SEN, 50% EAL, 40% FSM and 20% in-year mobility, only 1 permanent exclusion was made in the last 3 years. Persistent absence continues to fall. Pupils' progress is good, achievement is improving and the curriculum embraces a wide range of needs. All pupils are guaranteed FE places. The school now aims to develop a learning support unit for hard to reach pupils.

Bow School of Maths and Computing in Tower Hamlets was supported by the London Challenge Keys to Success programme from 2003 to 2007. This small multicultural school for boys has 80% BME, 60% FSM, 60% EAL, and high rates of SEN and mobility. In 2005, 29% of pupils achieved 5ACEM; in 2008, this had risen to 37%. Over the same period, the attainment of FSM pupils increased at twice the rate of non-FSM pupils (whose attainment also rose), from 29% 5ACEM to 40% – thus actually reversing the FSM gap.

Raising awareness of the challenges at all levels throughout a school can highlight issues which might otherwise have gone unrecognised.

Springfields School (Wiltshire) is a BESD) special school centre of excellence, removing all barriers to achievement for SEN children. It has reduced both fixed and permanent exclusions sharply by developing innovative outreach and in-reach packages, ensure consistency in behaviour management, an support fresh starts and planned transfers. Springfields is a completely non excluding school. NEET figures have been zero for two years, the average point score at the end of Key Stage 4 has doubled, and unauthorised absence is running at 1%.Springfields ensures real continuity of provision for its pupils – their aspirations and best interests come first in all decisions. Early identification of needs and swift referral is the key to preventing further disaffection.

Q3 Academy, formerly Dartmouth High School (Birmingham), focused on disproportionate Black Caribbean exclusions. A thorough look at data enabled the school to focus on specific areas which could reduce the risk of exclusion. The reintegration package was reviewed and a stronger intervention programme for students returning from fixed period exclusions was introduced. This led to a drop in repeat fixed period exclusions and permanent exclusions.

Parental Engagement and Early Years

Parental engagement in a child's learning has a major impact on later achievement – more significant than parental income. Schools have found many ways to link with their local communities and make parents feel welcome and connected with their child's learning.

Copeland Secondary School in Wembley (Brent) is aware of the importance of role models. This is reflected in their workforce, 45% of whom come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has introduced a number of strategies to strengthen parental engagement, for example providing online support and direction to help parents support their children with homework activities.

Blue Gate Fields Infant School (Stepney, Tower Hamlets), has run a range of initiatives designed to encourage parents to support their children's early year's development. Nearly all pupils are EAL. Activities on offer are based on developing parenting skills and experiences in order to help develop children's learning. In addition, all parents are encouraged to become volunteers during the school day through a six-week parent volunteer programme. A toy library for parents with pre-nursery children develops parents' playing skills with their children. An oracy group encourages families to play games together and practice speaking English in a safe environment. Parents, pupils and school staff believe the work has had a positive impact.

Parent support groups set up at **Lister Community School** (Newham) for Somali and Bengali parents have helped involve them in the wider school community. The groups help the school share information on school policies, curriculum issues, and adult learning, as well as offer support and advice about services and entitlements. The success of the groups and contributions from parents have resulted in new initiatives – such as special family learning sessions for Bengali-speaking parents and children, joint social events and learning opportunities. The school is seeing regular attendance from parents who had previously been hard to reach. The school is extending this approach within the local school cluster.

At **Caslon Primary School** (Dudley), family learning is at the heart of the school's drive to improve standards and engage with the community. Caslon serves an area of deprivation where levels of adult education are in the lowest 10 percent nationally. It is working hard to raise aspirations through partnership with parents. The school offers access to a wide range of family and adult learning courses and community activities. In 2008, over 35 different qualifications were achieved by Caslon parents studying through the school. This has led parents to engage directly with their children's learning. Adult learning is having a positive impact on pupils' motivation, attendance and standards – the school's Key Stage 2 scores have increased in each of the last four years, from 160 to 240.

7 Source: Teachers TV – www.teachers.tv/video/3053

Targeted support in basics

A rigorous focus on teaching and learning ensures that all pupils make progress.

In 2008 35% of the pupils attending **Lent Rise primary school** in Buckinghamshire were identified as having SEN – around double the national average. However, 95% of 11 year olds achieved national expectations in English, and 100% in science and maths. This reflects the school's determination to prove that having SEN doesn't mean a child can't achieve.

Schools like **Colveston Primary School** in Hackney get to grips with disaffection early on, and teach basic but crucial behavioural skills to help their Black boys stay focused on their own development.

Barlow Hall Primary School (Manchester) has 83% BME, 31% EAL, and 44% FSM pupils. Since starting Every Child a Reader in 2006, Barlow Hall has embarked on "a fascinating and critically important journey which has helped to transform our school". The Reading Recovery teacher worked closely with the Year 1 link teacher and the newly established literacy leadership team to implement a structured approach to the teaching and learning of reading across the school. Almost all the children involved in Reading Recovery come from families with a history of learning difficulties. The children's achievement – level 2B+ at the end of year 2 – is beginning to break the intergenerational cycle of disadvantage.

It is essential to ensure that the most challenging schools get their fair share of the most effective teachers.

Teach First puts high quality, well-motivated graduates into challenging secondary schools to teach priority subjects. Teach Firsters raise standards for pupils and across the whole staff, and often stay on beyond their basic two year placements. The Teach First Programme is now being expanded so that by 2013/14 there will be over 800 new trainees entering challenging schools.

The **Teaching Leaders** programme is designed for secondary middle-leaders in challenging urban schools in London. Each teacher on the programme has an individually tailored school project aimed at: achieving measurably higher pupil achievement in urban schools; closing the achievement gap; and showing sustainable improvements to behaviour and attendance. Following an initial cohort of 32, a second cohort of between 60-80 is to be recruited. The impact will then be evaluated and if successful, it may be expanded to other areas of the country.

8 Source: Teachers TV – www.teachers.tv/video/3053

Beyond the classroom; extended services; post 16

Breaking the link between poverty and attainment means changing deeply ingrained attitudes and filling gaps. Schools cannot do this through good teaching alone but the whole school workforce, parents and other pupils can all contribute. There is excellent practice in the use of extended services to expand opportunities for the least advantaged groups, and linking up with other agencies, often through the Children's Trust.

Handale Primary (Redcar and Cleveland) is already using the extended services disadvantage subsidy to fund activities for FSM pupils. With the LA's support the school carried out a consultation to identify new activities that would appeal to disadvantaged pupils, including an ICT animation activity, which the school now offers to pupils on-site using an external provider. 69 children take part in extended activities, compared with 22 pupils the previous year.

Progression mentors work in schools with high socio-economic deprivation within the Borough of Redcar & Cleveland. The mentors encourage the identified target group of young people to participate in activities which will meet individual learner needs to raise their aspirations and awareness of higher education and progression routes. The lessons learned are equally applicable to schools with lower deprivation but large gaps.

Teachers at **Aylesford School – Sports College** were worried about a number of their Year 11 girls who were disaffected with school and causing problems in lessons. They devised a scheme called 'Ladettes to ladies' to re-engage the girls and improve their attitude to education and their achievement. They achieved this by emphasising improving life skills, frequent and targeted rewards and praise, team building, giving the girls responsibilities and involving them in self-evaluation. The scheme has improved the girls' self-esteem, commitment to learning and achievement.

Relate's 'Time For You' service in Coventry provides pupils in 30 primary and secondary schools with individual counselling sessions, therapeutic group work and PSHE class work. The counselling and therapeutic services support young people experiencing divorce and separation, family change, domestic abuse, conflict and other issues. The feedback from teaching staff has been very positive – they recognise the need for this specialist service and value its effectiveness with children.

School and LA accountability

Local authorities can take the lead in initiatives which narrow achievement gaps.

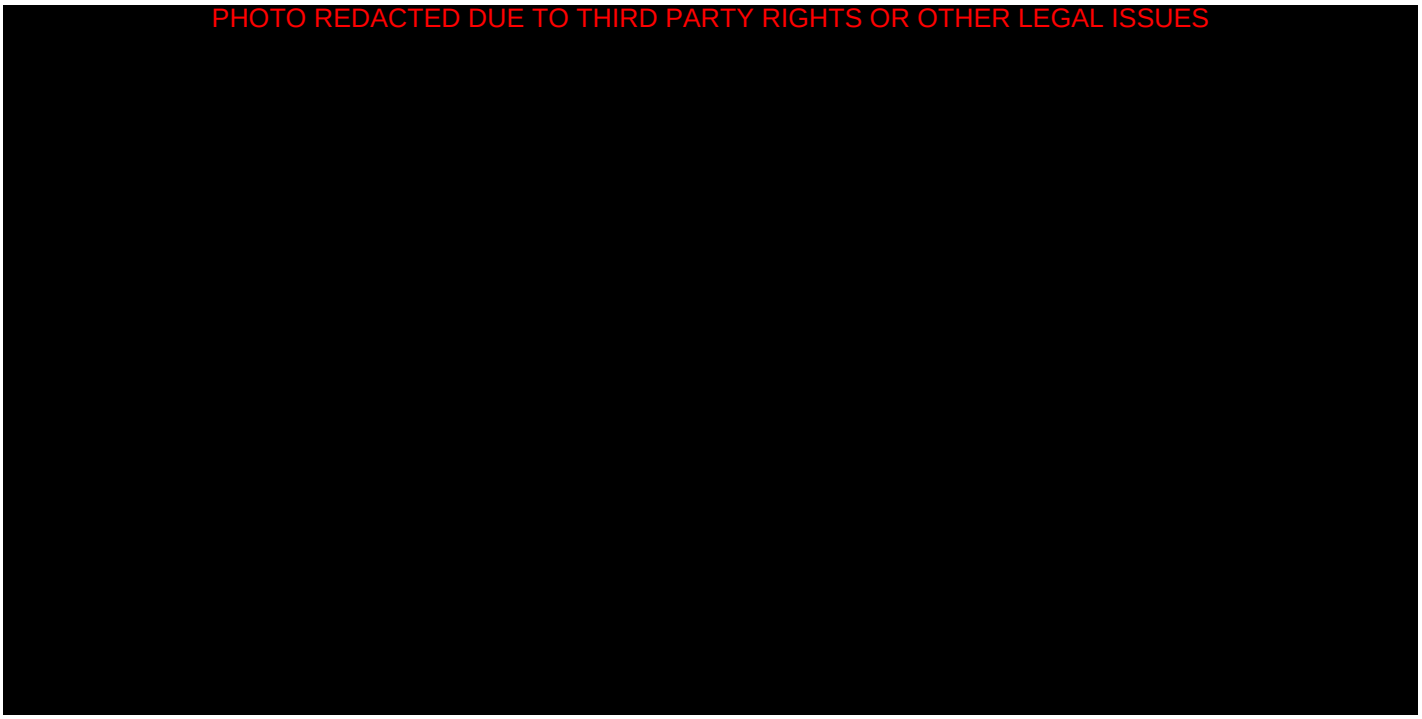
Somerset Local Authority narrowed the early years achievement gap by 3% in 2008 (to 33% down from 36% in 2007). This is partly due to good joint planning to support young children with additional needs on transition to school. A planning meeting is held at least two terms before any child identified at Early Years Action Plus begins school. 78 such meetings were held last year, co-ordinated through multi agency inclusion support teams, with a designated leading professional taking responsibility for the school entry planning process.

National Leaders of Education: A world class education system requires confident leaders of their own schools, who also work effectively with other leaders to provide well-integrated services. Challenging schools – both primary and secondary – need special help, and the programme has therefore been expanded to meet this requirement. Some 250 NLEs are now in place. More than 50,000 children have already benefited from the programme. Standards at supported schools are showing measurable improvements.

Hallfield Infant School (Westminster) has developed particular focus for children learning EAL, who make up 80% of the cohort, and for boys. Analysis of the 2008 Profile results helped practitioners identify the need for further development on planning and provision around problem solving and early mathematical mark making across Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy. A weekly "problem" is introduced and the children are encouraged to investigate and solve it during the week. Opportunities are also made available so that children can extend and adapt the initial problem.

Everton Children and Family Centre (Liverpool) have re-evaluated ways of working to develop a system of personalised learning based on the children's interests. This has led to a deeper understanding of each children's needs and his/her next learning steps. The results are a positive impact on the speed of children's progress, particularly of those children who need to make faster progress to catch up. Additionally, the Centre has a strong parental support programme in place including 'Fun Fridays' for parents to become actively involved in their children's learning, Dads' Clubs on weekdays and Saturdays, and courses to support adult learning.

Holmewood Nursery and Children's Centre (Lambeth) have developed strong parent and community links, particularly to provide opportunities to improve the home learning environment through ongoing education for parents. Parents speak highly of the programmes offered by the school which have given them confidence and support in developing their children's learning. To improve outcomes in the locality further the school promotes good practice with other settings through the local buddying arrangements



These case studies show how much good practice is already to be found, in so many parts of the country, and at so many levels in the system. This good practice is the main reason why the attainment gaps for disadvantaged pupils are beginning to narrow. But it is clear that we need to accelerate progress.

The Department has reviewed all areas of existing policy to see how they could be delivered differently or more effectively so as to provide an even stronger focus on breaking the link between disadvantage and attainment. The definition we have used is a broad and inclusive one. It encompasses all groups where the data shows a real risk of under- performance – not just FSM children, but all other groups for whom we have set specific national targets, namely:

- the seven under-performing minority ethnic groups, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, for whom local authorities have this year set statutory attainment targets
- pupils with identified special educational needs
- children looked after by a local authority.

In addition we monitor and target improvements for four groups who are particularly vulnerable: children with English as an additional language; new arrivals; highly mobile children; and those caught up in the criminal justice system, or with a parent in custody. The degree of overlap between all these groups is high and the effect of being in two or three of them can be much greater than singly. The Department will continue to monitor and provide good data at national and wherever possible at local level to enable progress for these groups to be tracked.

Personalisation means addressing the individual learning needs of every child: not just those who may fall below the average, but also those who may fail to reach the much higher thresholds of which they are capable. Of the roughly ten per cent of pupils identified by schools as gifted and talented, there is a significant under-representation of those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This suggests that great potential is currently going unrecognised, and perhaps undeveloped. Our policy direction set out in this document targets gaps at the bottom, and also the gaps at the top. Our gifted and talented guidance strongly encourages schools to ensure that they identify a genuinely representative sample of their intake.

The education system has available some very useful levers to narrow gaps and break the link. These include:

- new national and local targets, less burdensome and more focused on underperformance, based on accurate pupil level data and good analysis of trends
- existing school self-evaluation arrangements, backed up by a revised Ofsted framework for inspection and monitoring
- planned changes in the school accountability regime, notably the introduction of school report cards (on which we have just completed a first round of consultations)
- a vision for the well integrated school of the 21st century, which we intend to publish in our White Paper in May.

But as always, real and lasting change will come not through levers operated from above, but rather from commitment and action at school and local level. We will need to translate national strategies into local action that engages and gets behind the efforts of school leaders, classroom teachers and the wider school and children's workforce. Breaking the link means a radical change in the way schools link up with other services.

This is a challenge particularly to headteachers and their senior staff: to secure the best possible progress for their disadvantaged pupils. But schools can't do this on their own. The solutions do not lie uniquely with schools, but stretch out across all other services. So the challenge applies to local authorities, and to the leaders of every service which supports young people, from early years to age 19 and beyond. And, of course, our commitment to abolish child poverty by 2020 is a key part of our long term strategy.

Inspired by the example of the best schools which are leading the system and breaking the link, we are determined to back schools and teachers across our country so that every child – and not just some – can succeed.

6. Annex: Note on proxy indicators of deprivation

There are different proxies for disadvantage and the Government uses several of them, singly or in combination, for different purposes. In section 2 of Deprivation and Education – the evidence on pupils in England (published simultaneously with this document) we explain the relationship between the two main ones used in analysis of school results, namely eligibility for free school meals (FSM) which is a binary measure based on family income, and area-based measures notably the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI).

These and other proxies are acknowledged to be imperfect, but are still very useful in analysis of the impact of deprivation on attainment. The Department recently analysed the relationship between the four main ones: (FSM, IDACI, IMD and ACORN) and found that when converted to comparable format as binary variables, these measures have a similar relationship when applied to (for example) GCSE results and contextual value added measures.

FSM has particular value because it is a longstanding measure (its definition has barely changed over two decades); it is available at school as well as system level; it links objective and checked information about family income to the child's full school record including attainment; and being binary, it focuses on a relatively small group, roughly the bottom 15% by family income. The weaknesses of FSM include the following: not all children eligible for FSM are registered accordingly, either for administrative reasons or reluctance of parents to claim; a few children are ineligible who are in fact equally poor; and there is variability in local practice concerning encouraging parental applications and in registering and recording eligibility.

Acknowledging all these weaknesses, the Department's view is that assessments based on FSM have a fairly high level of credibility, so long as it is remembered that FSM is a proxy for deprivation and not a definition of it. This means that, especially at school level, professionals within the education service should look also at the deprivation-related needs of a broader group of vulnerable children. This group should include most or all FSM children, but also others known or believed to be in comparable circumstances.

A further point is that FSM is a measure which brings value and benefit for the children themselves when they are correctly registered for it. First, of course, it confers eligibility for its primary purpose, namely a daily free school meal; there is clear evidence linking good nutrition with pupils' health, behaviour, concentration, well-being and wider outcomes at school. For this reason, take-up of school meals is a National Indicator. Beyond this, however, there is an indirect link between FSM eligibility and the deprivation factors which underpinned historic calculations of the deprivation element of Dedicated School Grant (DSG), worth some £3 billion in the current year, or over 10% of the DSG total of £29 billion. This historic deprivation element was based in part on numbers of adults eligible for income support and certain other benefits, and these are also the determinants of current eligibility for FSM,

If the whole of the notional deprivation element of DSG (£3 billion) were divided by the current number of FSM children (some 15% of the total school population) the unit value would be £2,615. Thus the notional funding per deprived pupil, using FSM as the proxy for this, is £6,010 or 75% higher than the £3,395 notional unit value for each non-deprived pupil.

Many local authorities' local formulae for distributing funding to schools use eligibility for FSM as an explicit factor. This reinforces the importance of ensuring that eligible parents are given every opportunity to apply for FSM, since under-registration could mean that the school their child attends may not receive its full funding entitlement.

As discussed elsewhere in this document, the national school funding formula is currently being reviewed and any changes made would feed into school funding arrangements from 2011.

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