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Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales

The impact of RAISE 2008-2009

Evaluation of the impact of RAISE funding on raising the levels of performance of disadvantaged pupils

A report on the third year of the programme



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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



JULY 2009

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- ▲ teacher education and training;
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Introduction

Purpose of the report

- 1 The report evaluates the third year of the RAISE programme and follows on from previous Estyn reports on the first and second year¹. The report has been written to a request for advice in the annual Ministerial remit to Estyn for 2008-2009. The focus of this report is on the effectiveness of the programme in helping to raise the performance of disadvantaged pupils. The report also contains conclusions about the programme as a whole as 2008-2009 is the last year of the programme in its current form.
- 2 The report is based on visits by inspectors to a representative sample of schools and local authorities and an analysis of relevant data. Inspectors visited 25 primary schools, 13 secondary schools, three special schools and eight local authorities. During visits to schools, inspectors interviewed teachers and leaders, looked at the evidence provided, considered the work of pupils and spoke to them about their work in order to come to a view about the impact of the RAISE activities on pupils' achievements.

The RAISE initiative

- 3 In May 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government announced plans to release funding to target disadvantaged pupils in order to raise their level of performance. This grant is known by the acronym RAISE which stands for 'Raise Attainment and Individual Standards in Education'. The total grant to schools from the RAISE initiative in each year is about £14m.
- 4 The Welsh Assembly Government based the selection of schools to receive RAISE funding on the percentage of their pupils who were entitled to free school meals. The funding was not directed at all schools in Wales where there were pupils entitled to free school meals. Schools with 20% or more pupils entitled to free school meals would receive funding as long as they had 50 or more pupils of statutory school age.
- 5 In the third year of the initiative, 528 primary schools, 69 secondary schools and 32 special schools are eligible for RAISE funding. This represents about 30% of primary schools, 28% of secondary schools and 75% of special schools.
- 6 For the second and third year of the initiative (2007-2008 and 2008-2009), schools were notified in the summer term of the previous year of the RAISE funding they would receive. Except where there were school closures or amalgamations, the funding went to the same schools as in 2006-2007, though the amounts increased in those cases where there had been an increase in the number of pupils entitled to free school meals. Those schools involved in the first year whose proportion of free-school-meal pupils fell below 20% at the start of the second year continued to receive funding to fulfil their two-year plans. Similarly, schools in this situation at the start of the third year continued to receive funding.

¹ The Impact of RAISE funding
http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/The_impact_of_RAISE_funding_an_interim_report_July_2007.pdf
The Impact of RAISE http://www.estyn.gov.uk/publications/the_impact_of_raise.pdf

- 7 The amount of funding schools receive depends on how many of their pupils are entitled to free school meals. The funding in primary schools ranges from just under £11,000 to £30,000 per school, in special schools from £16,000 to £22,000, and in secondary schools from £47,000 to £220,000.
- 8 Each local authority in Wales has schools that receive RAISE funding. The total amount of RAISE funding to schools within each local authority ranges from about £112,000 in Monmouthshire to about £2,200,000 in Cardiff. Four local authorities (Gwynedd, Monmouthshire, Powys and Vale of Glamorgan) have no secondary schools that receive funding because none meets the criteria.
- 9 In May 2006, the Welsh Assembly Government sent a letter to all local authorities giving details of the schools qualifying for the grant and the funding individual schools would receive. It asked schools to prepare two-year plans for the use of the grant and to agree the proposed use of the funding with their local authority. There was also a list of the eligible uses of the funding and, later, a set of criteria against which the Welsh Assembly Government would evaluate each bid.

Main findings

- 10 Across Wales, and at all key stages, pupils entitled to free school meals perform significantly less well than those not eligible for free school meals against a range of performance indicators. The gap in performance is larger in secondary schools than in primary schools. Overall, there is too much variation between different local authorities in the level of performance of free-school-meal pupils and the rates of improvement over the last three years.
- 11 After two years of the RAISE initiative, there have been no major changes in the performance of free-school-meal pupils against the main performance measures. There are slight indications of a positive effect on the measures in primary schools, but the performance of free-school-meal pupils in secondary schools has deteriorated a little. Performance in 2009 and subsequent years may provide evidence of longer term trends.
- 12 In the schools visited as part of the survey, many pupils who are disadvantaged do not directly benefit from RAISE-funded work. This is because nearly all the schools that receive RAISE funding identify their targeted pupils by using criteria other than disadvantage. Only a few of the schools start to plan their RAISE-funded work by considering the needs of all disadvantaged pupils. Few average or more able disadvantaged pupils benefit from RAISE-funded activities.
- 13 In most schools, the achievement of pupils involved in specific RAISE-funded work has improved a great deal. Pupils benefiting from RAISE-funded work make at least good progress in about four-fifths of the schools visited. In nearly all the primary and special schools, and in many secondary schools, most gains are in pupils' literacy, especially reading. In many secondary schools, pupils' attendance and behaviour also improved after the RAISE-funded work.
- 14 RAISE-funded work has a strong positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and on the development of their personal, learning and social skills. In many schools, pupils involvement in the RAISE-funded work has given them increased confidence and self-esteem.
- 15 Over the three years of RAISE, schools' awareness of the need to consider ways of increasing the achievement of all disadvantaged pupils has increased. However, most schools do not do enough to monitor the achievements and progress of all disadvantaged pupils.
- 16 Few schools try to compensate for the barriers to the progress of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Very few schools have comprehensive strategies to close the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils. Most schools do not have a senior manager with responsibility for the oversight of the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- 17 Just over half the schools visited receive good support and guidance from local authorities. There are consistently good support and guidance in only two of the eight local authorities visited as part of the survey.

- 18 There is considerable variation between consortia in the working arrangements of regional co-ordinators. However, even taking this into account, there are important shortcomings in the work of the regional co-ordinators. Only in less than a third of schools has the regional co-ordinator had a positive and beneficial impact.
- 19 Schools plan to continue with the activities and/or build on what they have learned as a result of their involvement in RAISE. Many schools appreciate the importance of developing pupils' social and emotional skills and of the impact this can have on behaviour, attendance and standards of achievement. They also see the impact that targeted support can have on pupils. As a result, most schools wish to continue with the existing activities using mainstream funding.
- 20 Increased staff capability is one of the main legacies of RAISE. This is mainly through the acquisition of new skills, for example in teaching reading or running nurture groups, and by the development of leadership roles². In a few schools, RAISE-funded work has not led to any increase in capacity, especially in those schools that use the project mainly to fund additional staffing.
- 21 Schools welcome the RAISE approach of allocating funds directly to them. It means that staff can use the funding to meet their specific needs and circumstances in a flexible way.

² A nurture group is a small supportive class of up to 12 children that focuses on emotional and social development as well as academic progress. Pupils attend regularly for a substantial part of each week and usually return to their mainstream class in two to four terms.

Recommendations

In order to build on RAISE and to improve the performance of disadvantaged pupils:

schools should:

- R1 devise and implement strategies to raise the standards achieved by all disadvantaged pupils and close the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils;
- R2 establish systems to monitor and report on the standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils;
- R3 ensure that a senior leader has managerial responsibility for improving the standards achieved by disadvantaged learners; and
- R4 work with other services to provide a comprehensive, community-focused approach to compensating for factors that hinder the progress of disadvantaged pupils;

local authorities should:

- R5 monitor the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils in individual schools and in the authority as a whole;
- R6 use data on the performance of disadvantaged pupils when monitoring and challenging schools; and
- R7 work with other services to support schools in the most deprived areas to develop community-focused approaches to improving the standards achieved by disadvantaged learners; and

the Welsh Assembly Government should:

- R8 support the development of national benchmarks and set national targets for improvements in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils; and
- R9 provide leadership and support to local authorities and schools in the most deprived areas in developing community-focused approaches to improving the education and services for disadvantaged pupils.

What do schools do with their RAISE funding?

Pupils involved in RAISE-funded activities

- 22 In general, with a few exceptions, many of the pupils who are disadvantaged do not benefit from RAISE-funded work. In particular, few average and more able disadvantaged pupils benefit from RAISE-funded activities. The great majority of pupils who do benefit are those who do not achieve or behave as well as they should. Schools devise activities to improve the achievement, skills, behaviour or attendance of groups of pupils that have deficits in these areas. These groups include many pupils who are entitled to free-school-meals, but this is often a secondary consideration. As a result, the pupils who receive RAISE-funded work include many who are not disadvantaged.
- 23 The main reason for this is that nearly all schools identify their target pupils for RAISE-funded work by using criteria other than disadvantage. The most common criterion is performance in literacy, closely followed by a combination of criteria that normally include literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional development. Nearly all schools do this systematically through a test or combination of tests, backed up with appropriate teacher assessments and observations. When these schools do consider disadvantage, it is usually as an additional criterion once the main one or ones have been applied and it often relies on anecdotal rather than objective evidence of disadvantage. Only a few schools start to plan their RAISE-funded work by considering the needs of all disadvantaged pupils. These are schools that take a more holistic and broadly-based approach to developing their RAISE-funded work.

RAISE-funded activities

- 24 Nearly all schools use RAISE funding to set up and deliver distinct projects. The exceptions are those schools that use the funding to support or add to a wide range of activities that together make up a broad-based approach to tackling the effect of disadvantage on pupils' learning.
- 25 The tables that follow show the RAISE-funded activities in the primary and secondary schools visited for the survey.

| RAISE-funded activities in primary schools | Percentage of primary schools visited undertaking the activity |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Literacy | 92% |
| Numeracy | 48% |
| Nurture groups | 20% |
| Out-of-school hours activities | 12% |
| Development of social and emotional skills | 8% |
| Homework club | 4% |

| RAISE-funded activities in secondary schools | Percentage of secondary schools visited undertaking the activity |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Behaviour projects | 54% |
| Attendance projects | 46% |
| Literacy | 46% |
| Development of key skills | 38% |
| Options at 14-19 | 38% |
| Development of social and emotional skills | 31% |
| Mentoring of individuals or small groups | 31% |
| Numeracy | 23% |
| Study skills | 8% |
| Learning coach development | 8% |
| More able and talented | 8% |
| Out-of-school hours activities | 8% |
| Healthy living project | 8% |
| Measuring social and emotional skills | 8% |

- 26 Nearly all the projects in primary schools and special schools, and just under half in secondary schools, include the aim of improving standards in literacy. In around half of primary schools the RAISE-funded work also includes numeracy and a minority of schools use their RAISE funding to develop nurture groups or social and emotional skills³. In secondary schools, there is a stronger focus on improving pupils' behaviour and attendance and on broadening the curriculum, particularly in key stage 4.
- 27 A common trend in many schools over the course of the three years of RAISE has been to increase the attention they give to the development of social and emotional skills. Schools increasingly see the importance of developing these skills. Better social and emotional skills can lead to improved self-esteem and, in turn, have a beneficial impact on a number of aspects of pupils' performance, for example by improving their behaviour, attendance and wellbeing as well as their learning.
- 28 About half the projects in primary schools have a single focus. Nearly all of these schools focus on literacy, while the others with a single focus target social and emotional skills or numeracy. Just under a half of primary schools' projects have more than one focus. Most of these usually involve literacy and numeracy, but a few also include other skills such as social and emotional skills. Only a few schools take a broad, holistic approach to using the funding. These schools, all of which had particularly high proportions of pupils on free-school meals, use RAISE funding alongside recurrent or other grant funds to establish a systematic and coherent approach to improving the standards of all disadvantaged pupils.
- 29 The RAISE-funded work in secondary schools and special schools has a greater variety and scope than that in primary schools, mainly because of the larger funds that secondary schools receive. In only a few secondary schools does RAISE-funded work have a single focus and this is on either behaviour or social and emotional skills. The most common approach in many secondary schools is to have

³ Social and emotional skills include the skills of making positive relationships with other people, and of understanding and managing ourselves and our own emotions, thoughts, and behaviours.

a series of distinct projects that tackle a combination of issues such as behaviour, attendance, literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional skills. Only a few schools take a more holistic approach. In these schools, RAISE-funded work complements other activities that are available and accessible to nearly all the pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, for example the expansion of choices as part of Learning Pathways 14-19.

- 30 Nearly all the schools have modified their planned work as they proceed over the three years of RAISE, with many refining their work in the light of their experiences. Most often this leads to a more targeted approach that helps the school meet its objectives more successfully. In other cases, schools extend the work to include more pupils or other aspects over time.

What is the impact of RAISE?

Impact on pupils' achievement

- 31 In most schools, the achievement of pupils involved in RAISE-funded work improved a great deal. Overall, inspectors judge the progress of pupils on RAISE-funded work to be at least good in about four-fifths of the schools visited. This represents an improvement on the sample of schools visited last year and probably reflects the fact that RAISE activities have become more established in the working practices of schools. Nearly all pupils achieve the targets set for them as part of the RAISE-funded work. As a result, the targeted pupils make gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Most pupils can sustain and build on their achievements, but a minority are likely to make less progress once the RAISE-funded provision is reduced or removed.
- 32 In nearly all primary and special schools, and in many secondary schools, most gains are in pupils' literacy, especially reading. In many primary and secondary schools, the pupils involved in RAISE-funded work achieve the appropriate targets the schools set them in terms of National Curriculum levels at key stage 2 and at GCSEs or other recognised qualifications, including key skills qualifications, at key stage 4. In a few secondary schools, the proportion of pupils who disengage from education, employment and training (NEETs) is reduced.
- 33 Schools usually have quantitative evidence of the extent of the improvements in the standards pupils achieve. In most cases, especially in primary schools, the evidence takes the form of reading-age data or of results in standardised language and mathematics tests. There are similar measures in those secondary and special schools that target literacy or numeracy.
- 34 Too few schools analyse the impact of the RAISE-funded work on broader headline indicators such as the CSI in key stage 2 or 5 or more good GCSEs in key stage 4⁴. Also, very few schools compare the progress and achievement of pupils on RAISE-funded work with other pupils in the school or that of free-school-meal pupils with non-free-school-meal pupils. In the last Estyn RAISE report, we recommended that schools do more to establish clear targets for free-school-meal pupils, to monitor them and to report on them more systematically. Schools are still not doing enough of this.
- 35 In many secondary schools, pupils' attendance and behaviour have improved after the RAISE-funded work. In about half the schools, absences, especially unauthorised absences, have improved for the targeted pupils, even though in a few schools the overall attendance rate for the school has not improved. Also, in about half the secondary schools, there have been reductions in the number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions. In a few cases, there are very sharp reductions in exclusions.

⁴ The core subject indicator relates to performance in English or Welsh, Mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.

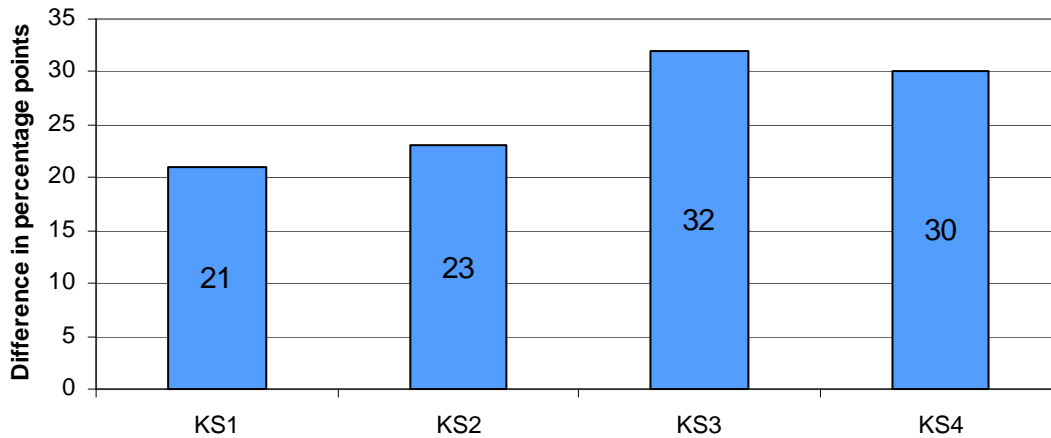
Impact on pupils' attitudes and the development of personal, learning and social skills

- 36 RAISE-funded work has had a strong positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and on the development of their personal, learning and social skills. In nearly all the schools visited as part of the survey, pupils' attitudes and motivation have improved. The engagement and interest pupils show in their work was a particularly strong feature in the RAISE-funded activities that inspectors observed. Pupils work hard and sustain concentration throughout the tasks.
- 37 Schools report that there have been marked improvements in the behaviour of pupils as a direct or indirect result of the RAISE-funded work. This is especially the case where the projects are aimed at improving behaviour, for example in nurture groups in primary schools. A minority of schools can substantiate this view through robust evidence, for example in the reduction of incidents or referrals resulting from poor behaviour.
- 38 In many schools, involvement in RAISE-funded work has given pupils increased confidence and self-esteem. This often results from the extra attention and support they receive as well as an increased sense of achievement in their work. In many secondary schools, pupils improve and clarify their aspirations as they become more confident about what they can achieve. These pupils are more aware of the opportunities for progression after key stage 4 and have become more positive about their future.
- 39 In many schools, RAISE-funded work has had indirect benefits for other pupils. In most of these schools, newly-gained staff expertise and new approaches to learning are being applied across the school. In a few cases, the withdrawal of pupils from classes for RAISE-funded work has led to a calmer environment in the school and allows teachers in mainstream classes to concentrate on fewer pupils.

The overall performance of disadvantaged pupils in Wales

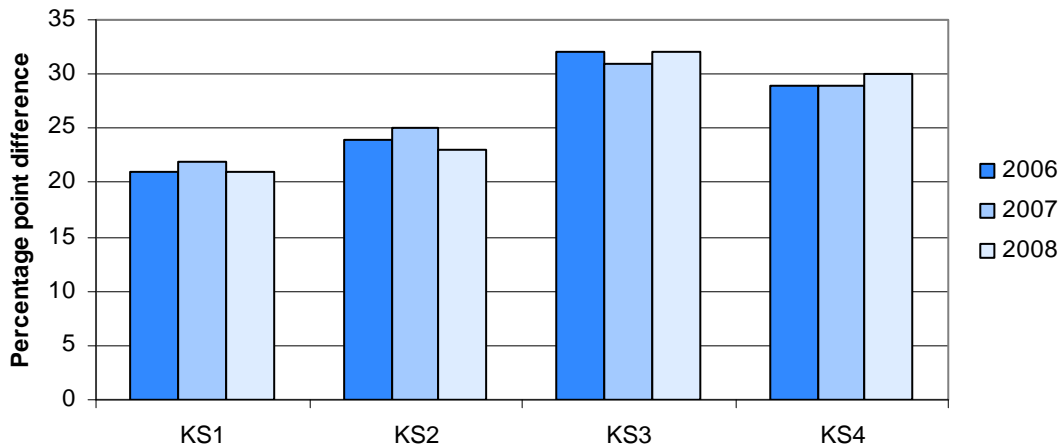
- 40 In our RAISE report for 2008, we commented on the performance of free-school-meal pupils in Wales against a number of important indicators over the period 2005 to 2007. We have updated this commentary in this report to include data from 2008. This still shows that, at all key stages, pupils who are entitled to free school meals perform significantly less well than those not eligible for free school meals against a range of performance indicators. The gap in performance is larger in secondary schools than in primary schools.

Gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils in CSI performance at each key stage in 2008



41 Over the last three years, which include two years of the RAISE initiative, the performance of all pupils in relation to the main performance indicators at all key stages has stayed much the same. This is shown in the following chart.

Gap between FSM and non-FSM pupils in CSI performance at each key stage between 2006 and 2008

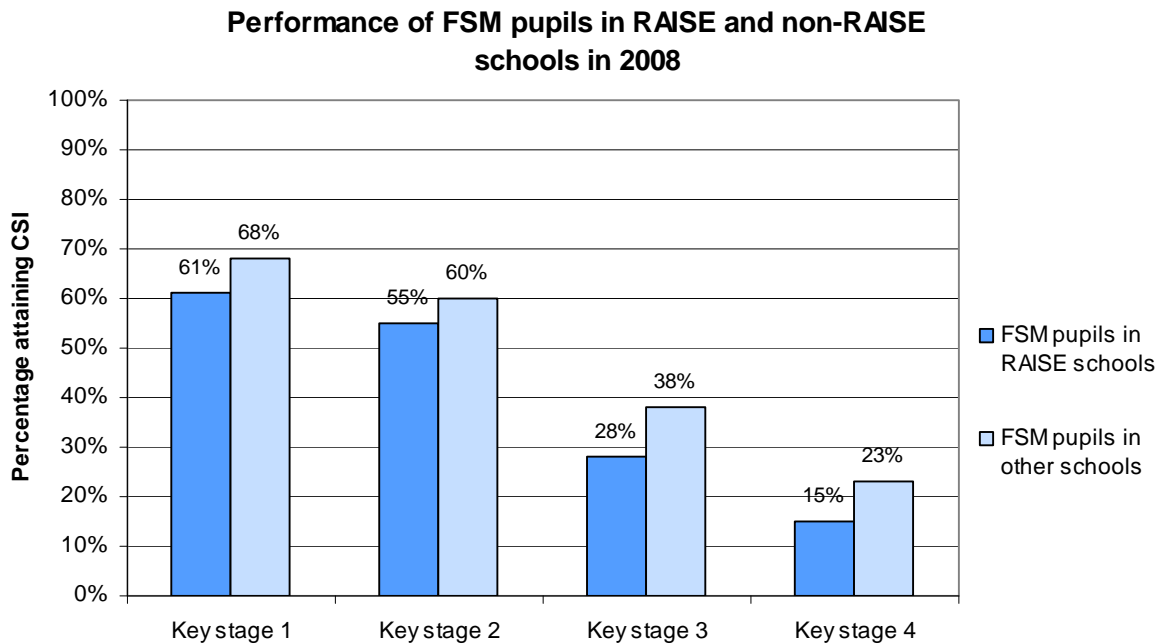


42 It is still early to assess fully whether RAISE has had any long-term impact on the performance of free-school-meal pupils. Also, it would be difficult to attribute any improvement to RAISE alone as a number of other factors would contribute. In addition, just under a third of primary free-school-meal pupils and half of secondary free-school-meal pupils are taught in schools that are not involved in RAISE. Performance in 2009 and subsequent years may provide firmer evidence of any long-term trends and help to judge whether the initiative has had a significant overall impact on the attainment levels of free-school-meal pupils. In addition, as many schools now increase their focus on the development of wide skills, including social and emotional skills, the benefits are likely to emerge over the longer term.

- 43 In last year's RAISE report, we commented on the variation in performance between different local authorities. We have updated this commentary to include data from 2008 and the detail of this can be found in Annex C. In 2008, there was still a wide variation in the performance of free-school-meal pupils in different local authorities. There is also a wide variation between local authorities in the trends in the performance of free-school-meal pupils over the period 2006 to 2008.
- 44 We recommended in our report in 2008 that the Welsh Assembly Government set a national target to improve the educational performance of free-school-meal learners. We also recommended that local authorities do more to establish clear targets for free-school-meal pupils, to monitor them and to report on them more systematically. This has not been done and doing so has the potential to sharpen the focus on disadvantaged pupils.

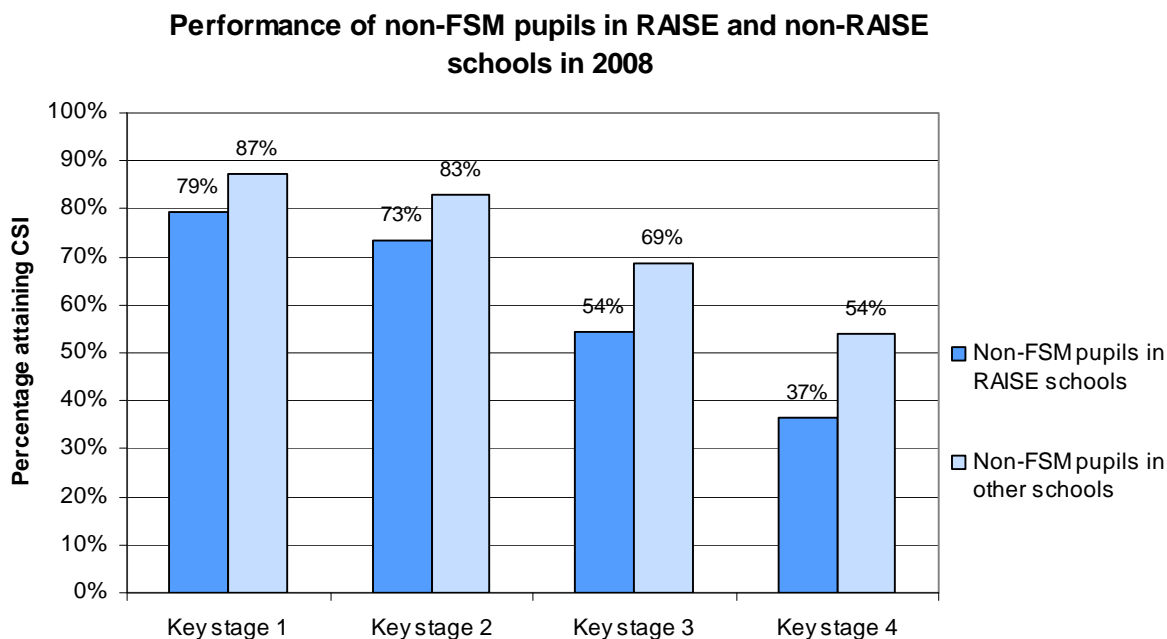
Performance of disadvantaged pupils in RAISE and non-RAISE schools

- 45 In this report, we analyse how the performance of pupils in RAISE schools compares with the performance of pupils in schools that did not receive RAISE funding.
- 46 The chart below shows the performance in 2008 of free-school-meal pupils in RAISE schools compared with the performance of free-school-meal pupils in non-RAISE schools.



- 47 Free-school-meal pupils are disadvantaged for the reasons given in Annex B and tend to perform worse than non-free-school-meal pupils in the same school. The chart above shows that in 2008 at every key stage free-school-meal pupils in RAISE schools perform worse than those in non-RAISE schools.

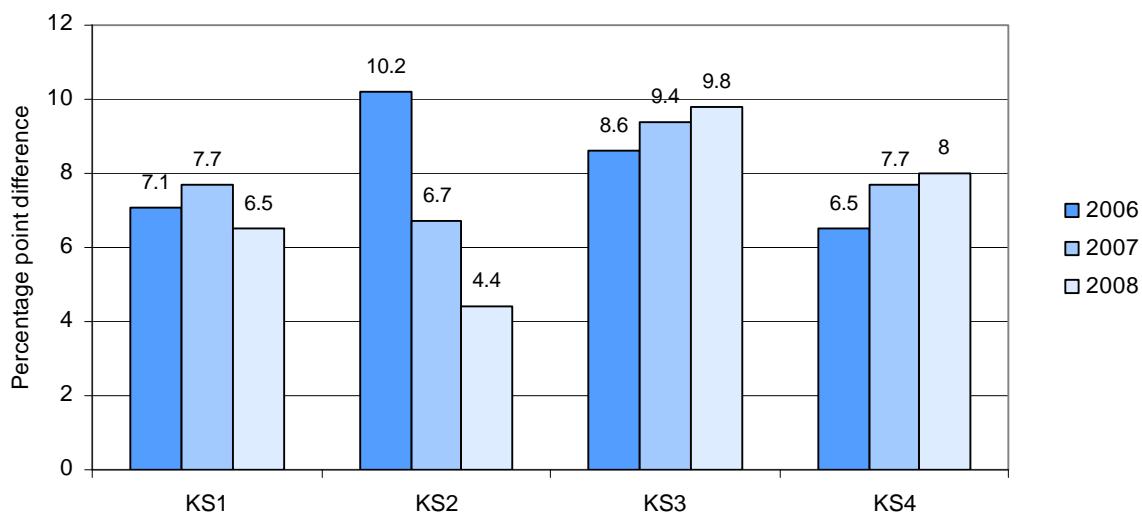
- 48 Pupils who are not entitled to free school meals in RAISE schools also do not perform as well as those in non-RAISE schools. This is the case at each key stage, for example in the CSI shown in the chart below⁵.



- 49 Overall, the charts above show that, in schools with higher proportions of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, there is also a negative effect on the performance of pupils who are not disadvantaged as well as on those who are disadvantaged. This indicates that the nature of the school has an effect on the performance of all pupils.
- 50 This appears to confirm the findings of research which suggests that the whole-school effect is considerable when the proportion of free-school-meal pupils in a school is relatively high. Pupils' performance is negatively affected by their own experience of deprivation, but it is also the case that other pupils who may not be materially deprived are additionally affected by the general level of deprivation in the school. In fact, the research suggests that the school effect is greater than the individual effect.
- 51 Free-school-meal pupils in RAISE schools are therefore doubly disadvantaged. This is because, in addition to performing worse than non-free-school-meal pupils in the same school, these pupils perform less well than they would do had they been in a school with a lower proportion of free-school-meal pupils.
- 52 The RAISE initiative was designed to raise the performance of disadvantaged pupils in the schools eligible for the grant. Even though it is still early days, there is evidence to suggest that it may be possible to identify some impact of RAISE when comparing the rate of improvement in the performance of free-school-meal pupils in RAISE schools with those in non-RAISE schools over a three-year period. The chart below shows the changes over the period 2006 to 2008.

⁵ The core subject indicator relates to performance in English or Welsh, Mathematics and science, the core subjects of the National Curriculum.

Gap between levels of CSI performance of FSM pupils in non-RAISE schools and those in RAISE schools



- 53 RAISE may be having a positive effect in primary schools, especially in key stage 2 where the gap between the performance of free-school-meal pupils in RAISE and those in non-RAISE schools has reduced from 10.2 percentage points to 4.4 percentage points. However, in either key stage in secondary schools, there does not seem to be any short-term impact. In fact, the gap has increased slightly. This supports research findings that the influence of the high proportion of disadvantaged pupils in a secondary school may be more difficult to counter than in primary school. This is because disadvantaged pupils find it harder to sustain progress as they become older. They find it harder to catch up if they fall behind, or for high attaining pupils, harder to excel. Once a disadvantaged pupil falls behind at key stage 1 and key stage 2, the gap widens through to key stage 4.
- 54 At key stage 2 in 2008, free-school-meal pupils in RAISE schools do slightly better than free-school-meal pupils in non-RAISE schools in three local authorities (Blaenau Gwent, Cardiff and Caerphilly). They perform less well in the remaining 19 local authorities, but the gap is less than five percentage points in 11 of these. The gap is over 10 percentage points in five local authorities. Four of these local authorities are those with low proportions of free-school-meal pupils, but one has the highest proportion of free-school-meals in Wales. Overall, evidence suggests that is difficult to correlate success in RAISE-funded work with individual local authorities as the variation is likely to be at individual school level. A similar analysis at key stage 4 cannot be carried out as there were either no pupils achieving the indicator or too few to report in half the local authorities.

How good are the leadership and management of RAISE?

The implementation of RAISE-funded activities

- 55 Most schools place a great deal emphasis on, and invest a great deal of energy in, their RAISE-funded work, despite the amount of funding being relatively small when compared with their overall budget. Schools generally pursue the work with drive and vision and are determined to make sure it has positive outcomes.
- 56 Many of the RAISE activities are either a continuation or expansion of existing work. The funding allows schools to continue with tried and trusted practices that are worthy of extension to more pupils or need the extra funding to continue. Only a few schools have introduced new or innovative approaches and, in most of these cases, the new approach adds an extra dimension to existing work, for example by introducing nurture groups to complement the school's work on improving behaviour.
- 57 In implementing their RAISE-funded work, about half the schools do not look beyond their own schools for new ideas and approaches. The remaining schools are more outward looking, often becoming more open to new ideas over the three years. The key factor in increasing openness to new ideas involves hearing about good practice from elsewhere. This sharing of good practice happens through:
- local and regional conferences on RAISE;
 - regular local RAISE meetings between all RAISE schools in an local authority;
 - visits from local authority officers or regional co-ordinators; and
 - visits to other RAISE schools or those that had already introduced an initiative.
- 58 The schools that improved their RAISE-funded work over the three-year period are outward-looking and more open to new ideas and actively seek them. In a number of secondary schools, this process involves seeking new partners to deliver aspects of the curriculum or personal support. However, in nearly all these cases, RAISE did not originally stimulate the work, but RAISE funding provides the opportunity to develop this aspect of provision.
- 59 In only very few schools do the objectives for RAISE include raising the achievement of all pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many schools only identify relatively narrow targets, for example increasing a pupil's reading age over a relatively short period of time, while few identify the impact on relatively broader performance indicators such as the CSI at key stage 2 or GCSE results at key stage 4. Very few schools have comprehensive policies and practices about how they propose to close the attainment gap between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils.
- 60 Overall, few schools try to compensate for the well-known factors (see Annex B) that tend to hinder the progress of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Again, it is only the schools that have taken holistic approaches that have started to deal with some of these underlying issues, for example in primary schools where there are links with Flying Start or where there is provision for out-of-hours learning.

Monitoring and evaluating RAISE activities

- 61 Nearly all schools use the recommended local authority or consortium format for termly and annual reports on their RAISE-funded work. About a third of schools have good procedures for evaluating RAISE, including a few where procedures are outstanding. However, in about two-fifths of schools, there are important shortcomings in schools' evaluations.
- 62 In the few schools with very good procedures, evaluation is rigorous and comprehensive, and makes good use of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative evidence. In these cases, RAISE is a prominent and integral part of established self-evaluation systems. A few schools with very good practice have regular termly meetings about progress in RAISE where there is a thorough review of valid and reliable evidence. In these schools and the others with good procedures, evaluation is regular, focused on the objectives of RAISE, and leads to improvements and adjustments to the work. Local authority officers usually make a useful contribution to schools' evaluation of RAISE, for example by including RAISE as a regular item on the agenda of link officer visits. Most of these schools have effective tracking systems, although only a few use them to monitor the progress of free-school-meal pupils compared with non-free-school-meal pupils.
- 63 A minority of primary and special schools and about half the secondary schools systematically collect evidence about the extent of improvements in attitudes and personal, social and learning skills. Some of these schools collect pupil and parent views through questionnaires, while others use specific instruments, such as PASS, to measure self-esteem⁶.
- 64 A minority of schools have important weaknesses in their evaluation of RAISE, while in a very few schools there is little rigorous evaluation of available evidence. The main shortcoming in this minority of schools is that the evaluation involves anecdotal or descriptive accounts of the work, even when the school has quantitative evidence to call on. Another common shortcoming is that the evaluation activity did not lead to conclusions or discernible improvements.
- 65 Over the three years of the RAISE scheme, schools' awareness of the need to consider ways of increasing the achievement of all disadvantaged pupils has increased, often as a result of reflection on the work, the sharing of good practice or at the prompting of the local authority or regional co-ordinator. A few schools now monitor the progress of all disadvantaged pupils, as a group. These schools have established detailed and effective tracking systems for monitoring the progress of all pupils. The systems are designed so that the schools can extract different groups of pupils according to specific characteristics such as disadvantage and to see if they are progressing as well as they should. However, most schools still do not do enough to monitor the achievements and progress of disadvantaged pupils.

⁶ PASS is the 'Pupil Attitude to Self and School' electronic rating scale which provides a profile of the learner's self-regard, perceived capabilities, perseverance, motivation, general work ethic, attitudes to teachers, their school and attendance, preparedness for learning and response to the curriculum.

- 66 One or two schools allocate the task of overseeing the progress of disadvantaged pupils to a specific member of staff who is able to ensure that the schools identify and meet the needs of these pupils. However, most schools do not have clear roles and lines of responsibility for this.

Schools' work with partners

- 67 In delivering RAISE-funded work, many primary schools do not work with any partners, other than meeting staff from other RAISE schools in meetings or conferences. RAISE projects in a few of these schools involve transition work with the local secondary school. In about half of the remaining primary schools, RAISE-funded work involves links with parents.
- 68 Only a minority of primary schools, usually those with high proportions of disadvantaged pupils, work extensively with other partners. In many cases, these links existed before RAISE, but RAISE allows their further development and improvement. These schools mainly work with partners such Flying Start, support services and family learning projects. Nearly all these schools aim to develop early intervention strategies by linking with pre-school provision or to increase the range of out-of-school hours activities. In many cases, schools place a great emphasis on increasing the involvement of parents. Some of these schools have developed successful strategies to involve parents in school activities, for example by contributing to literacy catch up programmes. Very few of the schools visited have developed access to a complete and coherent range of community, educational, childcare, social, early years and health services. For example, one school was part of a multi-agency 'preventative services group' that provides early intervention that included access to health, mental health services, behaviour support and social services, while another school, in addition to having breakfast clubs, Flying Start and out-of-school hours activities, was involved in a 'team around the child' project⁷.
- 69 As well as working with partner primary schools, secondary schools work with others to develop more choice in the curriculum, mainly in key stage 4 for lower-ability pupils. This usually involves links with the local further education college, but also includes working with work-based learning providers, youth support services and voluntary agencies. Where the work focuses on behaviour or attendance, relevant local authority services are involved. As with primary schools, none of the schools visited is working with the full range of community services in the area.
- 70 Partnership working is a stronger feature of work of special schools. Often this reflects the normal working practices of the school, rather than resulting directly from RAISE funding. Once again RAISE funding allows the further development of aspects of this work, for example the development of the forest schools initiative in one special school.

Guidance and support from the local education authority

- 71 Just over half the schools receive support and guidance of good quality from local authorities. There are shortcomings in the support offered by local authorities on the

⁷ Team Around the Child is a model of service provision in which a range of different practitioners come together to help and support an individual child.

remaining RAISE schools, including about one in ten schools where the support and guidance are inadequate. There is consistently good support and guidance in only Wrexham and Flintshire out of the eight local authorities visited as part of the survey.

- 72 Local authorities have the greatest impact where they integrate RAISE into other mainstream activities, such as including RAISE as an agenda item on regular link officer visits or as an aspect of annual self-evaluation arrangements. The good features of local authority support and guidance include:
- a supportive, interested and accessible presence, often when officers making programmed visits;
 - regular meetings of all RAISE schools to help share good practice;
 - useful guidance on identifying targeted pupils, establishing baselines and measuring progress;
 - helpful suggestions about new approaches or activities;
 - encouragement for schools to reflect and improve their work, occasionally involving a shift of focus, for example from working only on literacy to working on developing pupils' social and emotional skills; and
 - a strong focus on evaluating the impact of the school's RAISE-funded work.
- 73 Local authorities provide useful guidance to schools when making their bids and in ensuring that they meet the requirements of the grant. Increasingly throughout the three years of RAISE, local authorities have challenged schools to consider the sustainability of their projects and most encourage schools to focus more specifically on disadvantaged pupils rather than under-achieving or lower-attaining pupils. In most local authorities, the work on RAISE matches the local authority's own strategic priorities, especially in those that have relatively high proportions of disadvantaged pupils.
- 74 The most common weakness in the local authority support and guidance is in evaluating the impact of schools' RAISE-funded work and in providing advice and guidance on how the work can be improved. Although local authorities monitor progress of the majority of schools, they only evaluate the success or impact of RAISE-funded work in a minority of schools. Nearly all schools see their local authorities as being supportive of their RAISE-funded work and see that they are ready to give advice and guidance when required. However, this advice is often reactive and has limited impact on the development or quality of the work.
- 75 In the few instances where local authorities provide inadequate support and guidance, the schools receive little or no attention. Schools submit evaluation forms as required, but they receive no response from the local authorities about them.
- 76 Overall, even though they often enable the sharing of good practice, local authorities do not encourage or set up collaborative working between RAISE schools. There has been little attempt to relate RAISE-funded work to the broader local authority work on social justice or tackling child poverty.

Guidance and support from regional co-ordinators

- 77 There is considerable variation between consortia in the working arrangements of regional co-ordinators. However, even taking this into account, there are important shortcomings in the work of the regional co-ordinators. Only in less than a third of schools has the regional co-ordinator had a positive and beneficial impact. There are shortcomings in all other schools, including in just under a third where the support and guidance are inadequate. In the schools visited for the survey in two regions, support and guidance is at least adequate and generally good in one of them. In the other two regions, support and guidance from the regional co-ordinator are adequate at best and there are very few examples of good support and guidance.
- 78 Where the support and guidance is good, the regional co-ordinator visits the school to help develop projects and to discuss progress. In these cases, the advice and suggestions are clear and useful, and lead to an improvement in what the school planned to do or was doing. In many cases, the regional co-ordinator works well with the local authority, for example undertaking joint visits or holding joint meetings. In the best cases, the regional co-ordinator undertakes evaluation activities, such as visiting lessons or examining performance information.
- 79 The most beneficial impact of the regional co-ordinators is in sharing and promoting good practice. Schools see the regional conferences as useful in this respect and in helping to establish informal networks. Regional co-ordinators often disseminate information from national evaluations of RAISE. Occasionally, the regional co-ordinator uses school visits to make schools aware of what has proved successful in similar activities in other schools.
- 80 In the schools where the work of the regional co-ordinators is seen to be inadequate, there is little or no contact with them. The regional co-ordinator has little or no influence on what the school was doing. In a few cases, there are no visits to monitor progress or to provide advice and guidance.

What is the legacy of RAISE?

Sustainability of RAISE activities

- 81 Schools consider their RAISE-funded work to be successful and worthwhile and they plan to continue with the activities and/or build on what they have learned as a result of their involvement in RAISE. Most schools will continue with the existing activities using mainstream funding. A minority of these will do so on a smaller scale, while a few will stop some parts of the work, especially where this work has been dependent on staff paid from RAISE funds. Much of the RAISE-funded work has become part of the normal work of the school and, where this is so, it is likely to continue. Only a very few schools intend to stop RAISE activities altogether where they depend on additional staffing paid by RAISE.
- 82 Most schools are taking account of the ending of RAISE funding and have planned accordingly. A few schools visited in the autumn term were unsure about what to do next, mainly as a result of uncertainty about their mainstream budget. Most schools want to continue with the RAISE activity and are prepared to subsume the cost into their budget. One or two schools are seeking to find additional sources of funding, for example through funding related to Learning Pathways 14-19.
- 83 The activities that schools have embedded into their normal practice are mainly concerned with literacy or numeracy or the deployment of newly-acquired staff skills, for example where a teaching assistant works with individuals or small groups of pupils on a literacy scheme or where learning coaches work with potentially disaffected pupils. Many schools have usefully gained new resources, particularly in schemes for English or Welsh and mathematics. A minority of schools have adopted new systems to diagnose needs, often including social and emotional skills needs. However, most of these systems do not focus clearly enough on disadvantage.
- 84 A few schools have refined their systems for tracking pupil progress so that they can monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils. A minority of schools have new ways of dealing with poor attendance or behaviour or inclusion in general, with the development of nurture groups being a common approach in primary schools. New management roles and responsibilities have been defined in secondary schools to give a lead on this work.
- 85 In many secondary schools, RAISE funding has complemented other funding to help provide a wider choice of courses at key stage 4. These courses are mostly vocational and often involve working with a range of partners, and are mainly for middle or lower-ability pupils. Despite their involvement in RAISE, one or two schools have not made their RAISE-funded activities a feature of their normal day-to-day working practices.

The legacy of RAISE in schools

- 86 Building the capabilities of staff is one of the main legacies of RAISE. Many teachers and teaching assistants have undergone training to improve their skills, for example in new approaches to teaching reading or running nurture groups. In many schools,

an important outcome has been an increased repertoire of skills for teaching assistants. Another important way in which the school's overall capabilities have been expanded is in the development or refinement of roles. For example, a few secondary schools have developed the role of the learning coaches further than they would have done otherwise. In a few schools, there are developments in the role of leaders and managers, for example the enhanced role of an 'inclusion manager' in one school, while a senior manager in another school is taking on the role of a 'champion' for disadvantaged pupils. In a few schools, RAISE-funded work has not led to any increase in capability. This is particularly so in those schools that use the funds to staff additional teaching groups or more withdrawal of pupils.

- 87 In addition to the activities that are to be sustained and the additional capacity, RAISE also has other positive effects on schools. Over the period of the programme, most schools have developed a better understanding of the link between achievement and disadvantage. They also see the impact that targeted support can have on pupils, even though most of those who benefit are underachieving rather than disadvantaged. Many schools appreciate the importance of the planned development of social and emotional skills and of the potential impact this has on behaviour, attendance and standards of achievement.

Conclusions

What has worked well and why?

- 88 The additional funding is the crucial factor in successful RAISE-funded work. It allows schools to take on extra staff to work with individuals or small groups of identified pupils.
- 89 However, a range of other factors have also affected the degree of success achieved with these extra resources. These are:
- leadership and vision shown by the headteacher or, on occasion, the member of staff responsible for leading RAISE in the school;
 - initial planning based on a clear idea of what was to be achieved and effective implementation of the planned actions;
 - whole-school approach to RAISE-funded work that involves all or many of the staff and where any lessons learned are shared;
 - staff working together, from a teacher and associated teaching assistant to a large number of staff working on different aspects of the same project;
 - staff delivering the programme to a high standard;
 - well-targeted training leading to an increase in the skill level of staff;
 - use of clear and specific intervention strategies; and
 - a willingness to be flexible and to learn from evaluations so that the school could act on any identified weaknesses or failures in the projects.

What has been unsuccessful and why?

- 90 In general, individual RAISE-funded projects are successful and there is no common pattern to the failure to meet targets or expectations. A relatively common difficulty in primary schools has been a failure to achieve greater engagement of parents in their children's learning, despite the school setting up specific provision such as a family learning programme. In a few schools, practical problems hamper progress, for example lack of space for nurture groups, timetabling difficulties or inadequate ICT. In a small number of schools, staff turnover or absence causes problems.
- 91 The most common limiting factor is usually an unclear and too general focus to the purposes of the RAISE-funded work or an inappropriate choice of intervention strategies, for example deciding to adopt a mathematics scheme that proved ineffective. In many schools, the narrow scope of their project limits the impact to a relatively small number of pupils and many disadvantaged pupils do not gain any direct benefits.

Overall effectiveness of the RAISE approach to raising performance of disadvantaged pupils

- 92 Schools overwhelmingly welcome the RAISE approach of allocating funds directly to them. Although there are some disadvantages, schools feel that these are clearly outweighed by the advantages. Schools are able to use the funding to meet their specific needs and circumstances in a flexible way. They also appreciate the need to establish a purpose and clear parameters for the funding. Many are pleased that local authorities did not 'top-slice' the funds. Schools feel that the processes and procedures for gaining and administering the grant have improved markedly from the first year of the RAISE initiative.
- 93 The main disadvantage is seen to be the bureaucracy surrounding the programme, especially the submission process and the requirements for monitoring and evaluation. A majority of schools feel that this level of bureaucracy is only right and proper where the spending of public money is concerned, although a few of these believe that the effort involved in the bureaucracy outweighs the benefits to schools.
- 94 After a difficult start for RAISE, the relationship between the Welsh Assembly Government, and schools and local authorities has improved considerably. The Welsh Assembly Government officials involved in RAISE are seen to be accessible, receptive to comments and suggestions, and willing to provide direct help when needed. Productive meetings to discuss the RAISE strategy for 2009-2010 have further strengthened the relationship between local authorities and the Welsh Assembly Government. The RAISE conferences organised by the Welsh Assembly Government and consortia are seen to be particularly valuable in hearing about developments in relation to disadvantaged pupils, sharing good practice and in establishing informal networks. Similarly, conferences for local authorities and for regional co-ordinators are effective in discussing issues and clarifying messages about RAISE. The regular feedback from the evaluation work of the People and Work Unit has had a beneficial impact on the development of RAISE. We recommended in last year's report that the Welsh Assembly Government establish its RAISE website in order to help share good practice. However, there has been slow progress on this and the website is still not functioning as intended.
- 95 Local authorities welcome the principle and ambitions of RAISE, and the extra funding it generates, even though RAISE was introduced at short notice and without any clear role for the local authority. However, local authorities are dealing with a multiplicity of grants for which bids have to be made and systems put in place. In many local authorities, this places a significant strain on its limited resources. Most local authorities feel strongly that the RAISE style approach of time-bound grants conflicts with longer-term planning and strategic development.
- 96 The Welsh Assembly Government has allocated RAISE funding to schools with over 20% of pupils eligible for free school meals and where there are more than 50 pupils on roll. This has the advantage that funding is allocated to schools with relatively large proportions of free-school-meal pupils and so goes some way to addressing the double disadvantage that affects pupils in these schools. The schools receive enough funding to support worthwhile work. However, it remains the case that there is no support for the many free-school-meal pupils in schools that do not receive RAISE funding.

- 97 Although schools with higher proportions of free school meals receive proportionally more funding (and funding is further skewed towards secondary schools with high levels of free school meals), the RAISE programme and funding still does not distinguish enough between schools with relatively moderate proportions of free-school-meals pupils and those with much higher proportions. The schools with high proportions are significantly affected by the double disadvantage referred to earlier. A different approach may have been more suitable for these schools. In these schools, RAISE could have focused on compensating for the wide range of factors known to affect the performance of disadvantaged pupils, for example by increasing childcare arrangements or provision for out-of school-hours learning, and included attempts to develop holistic approaches that involved agencies beyond the school.

Annexes

A Welsh Assembly Government policy

In February 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government produced a strategy to tackle child poverty, called 'A fair future for our children'. This sets out how the Welsh Assembly Government would contribute towards the achievement of the UK Government's target to reduce child poverty by half by 2010 and to eradicate it entirely by 2020.

The Child Poverty Implementation Plan: Phase 1 Proposals, published in 2006, included a general proposal to steer initiatives and spending proposals towards the eradication of child poverty so as to benefit the poorest children and their families.

Many educational policies and initiatives have derived from this overall drive to tackle socio-economic disadvantage, including the RAISE initiative. These include:

- 'Flying Start', aimed at 0 to 3-year-olds and their families;
- the introduction of the foundation phase for 3 to 7-year-olds;
- the development of integrated children's services in local authorities;
- the provision of educational maintenance allowances to 16 to 19-year-olds from lower income homes;
- Learning Pathways 14-19; and
- the establishment of national targets for child poverty, including reducing the proportion of 16 to 18-year-olds who are not in employment, education or training.

In March 2009, the Welsh Assembly Government introduced the proposed Children and Families (Wales) Measure into the National Assembly for Wales. The proposed Measure makes statutory provision, through a legislative framework, to take forward the Welsh Assembly Government's commitments in terms of child poverty. The legislation makes provision for Welsh authorities, including Welsh Ministers and local authorities, to prepare and publish a strategy for contributing to the eradication of child poverty in Wales. It will also include provision for greater support to families where children may be at risk and will strengthen regulation and enforcement in childminding and day care settings for children.

B Pupils entitled to free school meals

The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is often used as a proxy for relative deprivation because pupils can receive free-school-meals if their families get a designated state benefit, such as income support or job seeker's allowance, as a result of relatively low income.

Pupils entitled to free school meals form a relatively large proportion of the school population. In 2008, 17% of pupils of statutory school age were entitled to free school meals (64,604 pupils). Of these, 55% were in primary schools, 43% in secondary schools and 2% in special schools⁸.

There is considerable variation between local authorities in the proportions of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. This ranges from 24.6% in Merthyr Tydfil to 9.5% in Powys. In five authorities over 20% of its pupils are entitled to free-school-meals (Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent and Cardiff).

Entitlement to free-school-meals does not mean that a child is destined to underachieve. Children from relatively poor backgrounds can and do achieve at the highest level and schools serving poor neighbourhoods can also outperform schools with more affluent catchment areas.

However, in broad terms, there is a strong statistical link between poverty and low educational attainment. Overall, pupils from poorer families or who are in care are far more likely to attain at lower levels than other pupils. As a result, it is often harder for these pupils to gain high-skilled employment or to engage in further or higher education later on.

End Child Poverty Network Cymru and Children in Wales have noted that children from unskilled backgrounds are five times less likely to go on to further and higher education than those from more affluent backgrounds⁹. They set out the following factors, which they believe hinder effective learning in poorer homes¹⁰:

- comparative lack of access to resources, activities and opportunities outside school;
- living in overcrowded and inadequate housing;
- limited parental involvement in education;
- the expectations and influences of the peer group;
- the impact of stigma, bullying and not feeling respected;

⁸ SDR 115/2008 Schools Census 2008: Provisional Results, Statistical Directorate, Welsh Assembly Government 2008

⁹ 'Tackling Child Poverty in Wales: A good practice guide for schools', End Child Poverty Cymru and Children in Wales, 2006

¹⁰ See above and 'Combating child poverty in Wales', Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007

- emotional and behavioural difficulties;
- higher levels of additional learning needs;
- disengagement from secondary schooling; and
- increased likelihood of teenage pregnancy.

Overall, the underachievement of children from poorer families is a significant factor in limiting both the achievement and life-chances of these young people and also the success of Wales as a learning country.

C Performance of disadvantaged pupils in different local authorities

Some caution needs to be taken when looking at the performance of free-school-meal pupils in different authorities as the size of the cohort varies and numbers can be relatively small in one or two authorities. Even so, there is a wide variation in the performance of free-school-meal pupils in different local authorities. The table below shows the performance in 2008 in the CSI at key stage 2 and key stage 4, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals¹¹.

CSI outcomes for FSM pupils at key stage 2

| LAES | CSI | FSM |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|
| Pembrokeshire | 63% | 14% |
| Monmouthshire | 62% | 9% |
| Newport | 61% | 18% |
| Isle of Anglesey | 61% | 16% |
| Torfaen | 61% | 18% |
| Ceredigion | 60% | 13% |
| Cardiff | 59% | 13% |
| Neath Port Talbot | 58% | 18% |
| Conwy | 58% | 13% |
| Denbighshire | 58% | 15% |
| Bridgend | 57% | 19% |
| The Vale of Glamorgan | 57% | 11% |
| Wales | 57% | 16% |
| Flintshire | 56% | 10% |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf | 56% | 23% |
| Caerphilly | 56% | 18% |
| Swansea | 56% | 17% |
| Powys | 55% | 9% |
| Gwynedd | 53% | 12% |
| Wrexham | 53% | 13% |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 52% | 24% |
| Carmarthenshire | 49% | 17% |
| Blaenau Gwent | 46% | 20% |

CSI outcomes for FSM pupils at key stage 4

| LAES | CSI | FSM |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|
| Neath Port Talbot | 28% | 18% |
| Powys | 28% | 8% |
| Conwy | 25% | 13% |
| Carmarthenshire | 25% | 13% |
| Gwynedd | 24% | 10% |
| Swansea | 23% | 17% |
| Pembrokeshire | 22% | 11% |
| Isle of Anglesey | 21% | 13% |
| Flintshire | 21% | 8% |
| Denbighshire | 21% | 11% |
| Ceredigion | 20% | 8% |
| Wales | 19% | 14% |
| Caerphilly | 18% | 17% |
| Monmouthshire | 18% | 9% |
| The Vale of Glamorgan | 18% | 10% |
| Torfaen | 17% | 14% |
| Cardiff | 17% | 18% |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf | 16% | 18% |
| Wrexham | 16% | 14% |
| Bridgend | 14% | 14% |
| Newport | 14% | 16% |
| Blaenau Gwent | 13% | 19% |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 8% | 22% |

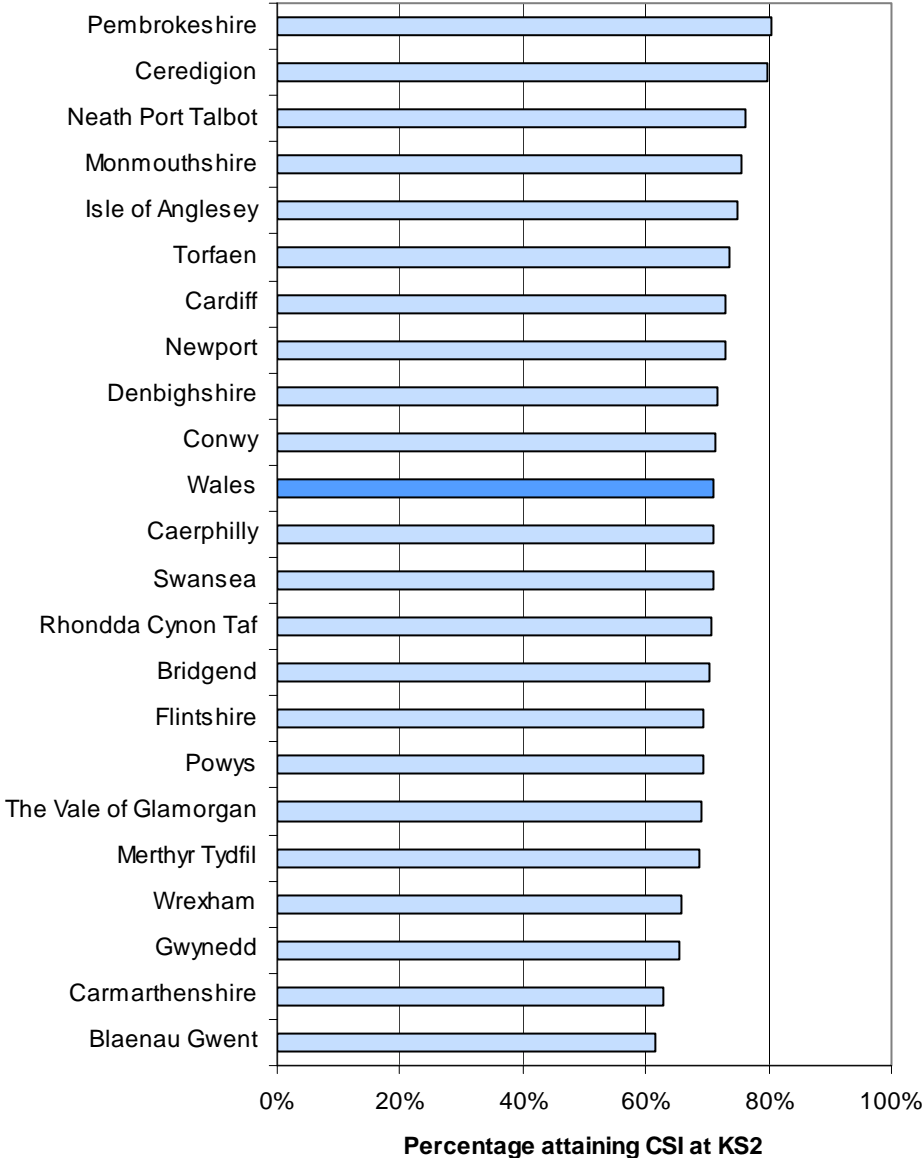
As the table shows, in 2008 free-school-meal pupils perform best in the CSI at key stage 2 in Pembrokeshire and Monmouthshire, and worst in Blaenau Gwent and Carmarthenshire. In the CSI at key stage 4, free-school-meal pupils perform best in Neath Port Talbot and Powys, and worse in Merthyr Tydfil and Blaenau Gwent. None of the local authorities perform well in both key stages, although Neath Port Talbot and Conwy show more consistency than other local authorities. Three local authorities (Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil and Wrexham) are low performers at both

¹¹ The percentages for free school meals are for primary schools in the key stage 2 table and for secondary schools in the key stage 4 table.

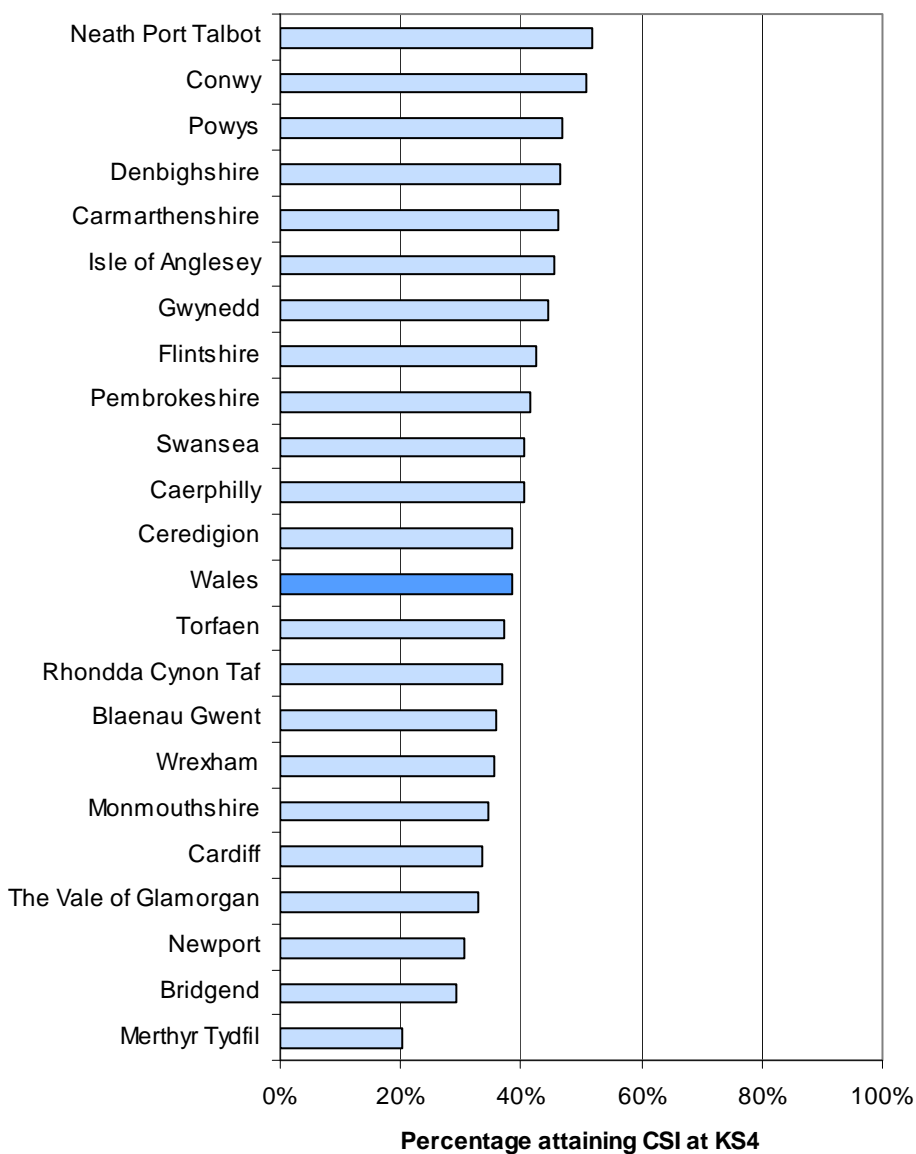
key stages. At key stage 2, there does not seem to be any clear relationship to the degree of disadvantage in different local authorities. At key stage 4, there is a stronger relationship to the degree of disadvantage, although Neath Port Talbot and to some extent Swansea are exceptions that exceed expectations.

The charts below show the proportional gap in attainment between free-school-meal pupils and non-free-school-meal pupils in the CSI at key stage 2 and key stage 4 in 2008. This shows the performance of free-school meal pupils as a percentage of the performance of non-free-school meal pupils.

Performance of FSM pupils in CSI at KS2 as a proportion of the performance of non-FSM pupils



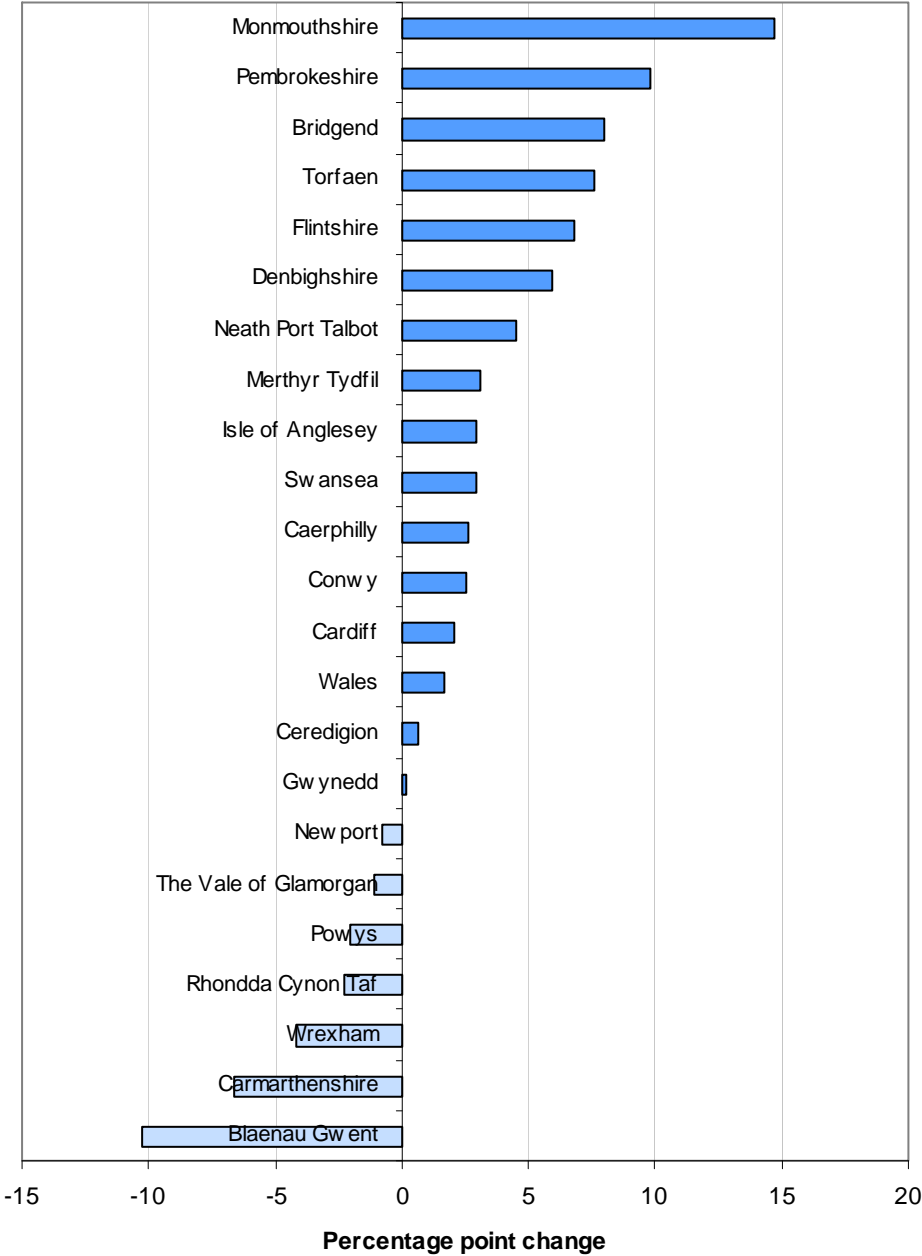
Performance of FSM pupils against CSI at KS4 as a proportion of the performance of non-FSM pupils



The charts show that the differences between local authorities are greater at key stage 4 than at key stage 2. The highest proportion in the CSI at key stage 2 in 2008 was in Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion, whereas at key stage 4 it was in Neath Port Talbot and Conwy. The lowest proportions and consequently the widest gaps in the CSI at key stage 2 are in Carmarthenshire and Blaenau Gwent, while at key stage 4 they were in Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil. Overall, a few local authorities (Neath Port Talbot, Isle of Anglesey and Pembrokeshire) manage to keep a relatively positive position at both key stage 2 and key stage 4.

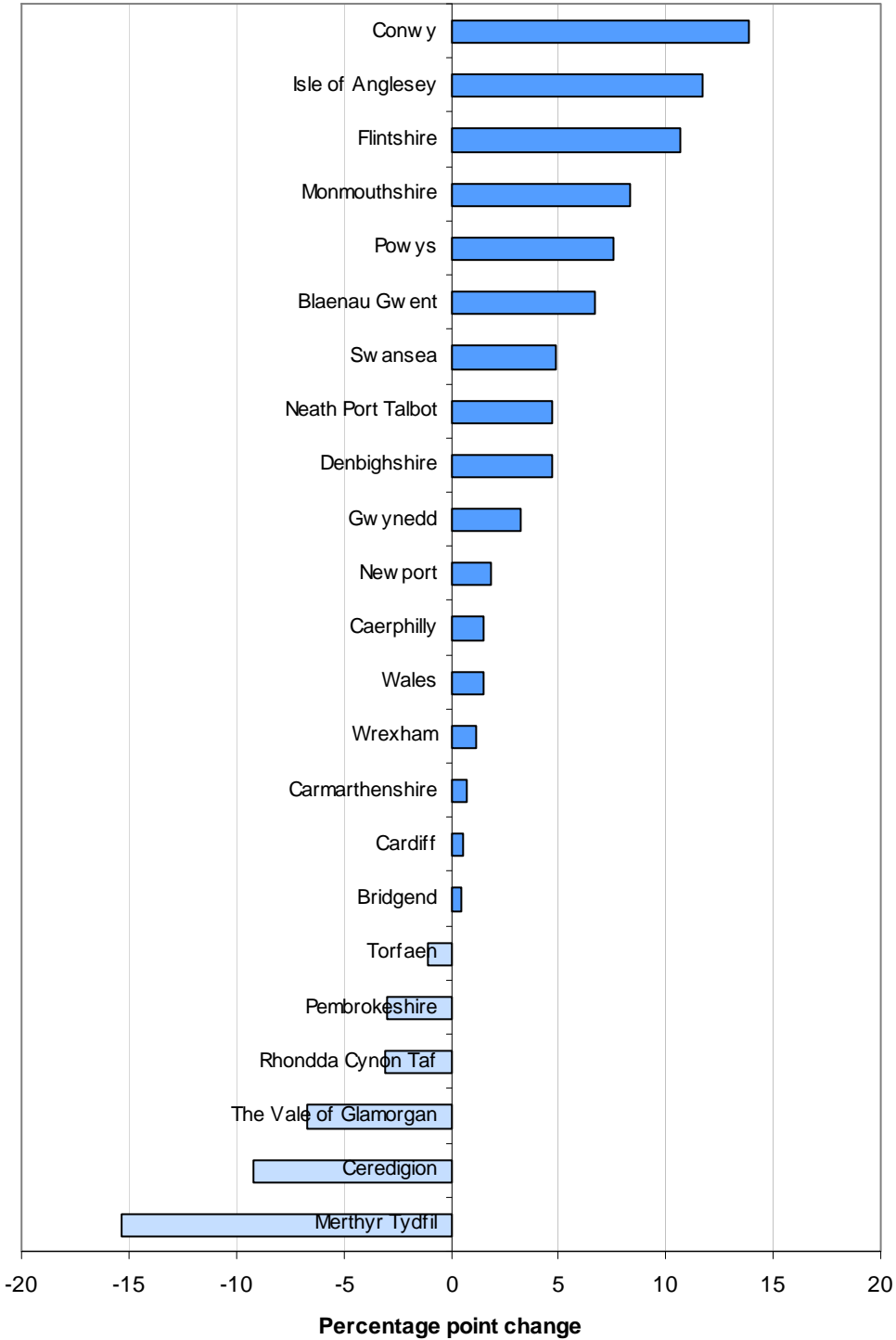
The charts below show the trends in the performance of free-school-meal pupils in the CSI at key stage 2 and key stage 4 in 2008.¹²

Differences in performance of FSM pupils in CSI at KS2 between 2006 and 2008



¹² For key stage 4, the proportion attaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C is used instead of the CSI because in one local authority there was no data for the CSI as there were too few pupils to report. The five or more GCSE grades A* to C analysis allowed all local authorities to be included.

Differences in performance of FSM pupils in five or more A*-C between 2006 and 2008



Over the last three years, there is a wide variation in the trends in the performance of free-school-meal pupils. At both key stages, the performance of free-school-meal pupils has improved markedly in a few local authorities, but also declined significantly in a few others.

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|-------------------------------------------|
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