

# ***Social Mobility: Narrowing Social Class Educational Attainment Gaps***

**Supporting Materials to a speech by  
the Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP  
Secretary of State for Education and Skills  
to the Institute for Public Policy Research**

**26 April 2006**

# Overview

---

- This work follows on from the Secretary of State's speech to the Institute for Public Policy Research on Social Mobility in July 2005
- Parts A to C of this slide pack extend the earlier analysis of the nature of the social class attainment gap at Key Stage 2, to cover all Key Stages and beyond. It also considers how these gaps have changed over time, and identifies the drivers of the gap
- The material also presents new analysis comparing the progress made by pupils receiving Free School Meals (FSM) and those who do not by school type
- Part D of this work looks at the Department's policies across different age ranges and considers what contribution they may be making to narrowing the social class attainment gap

# Contents

---

## **PART A: What does 'social mobility' mean for the DFES?**

PART B: What is the attainment gap and what is happening to it?

PART C: What are the key drivers of the gap, and what do we know about what might narrow it?

PART D: How might current policies contribute to narrowing the gap?

- Early years ages 0-5
- School ages 5-19
- Ages 19+

PART E: Challenges and priorities

## Social mobility defined

---

Academic definitions of 'social mobility' are often expressed ...

**... by Economists:**

As the movement, or opportunities for movement, between different **income groups**.

**... by Sociologists:**

As the movement, or opportunities for movement, between different **social class groupings**, and how social class may act as a barrier to such movement.

Social mobility can be considered over an individual's lifetime (intra-generational mobility) or between generations (inter-generational mobility)

---

Source: see for example: *Maintaining Momentum: Promoting Social Mobility and Life Chances from Early years to Adulthood*, IPPR, 2005

# Improving social mobility is important for individuals, the economy and society

---

## For the Individual

- Reduces the extent to which your life outcomes are dependent on your family background
- Ensures that people are more likely to achieve their potential
- Can contribute to improved self-esteem and higher levels of life satisfaction and happiness

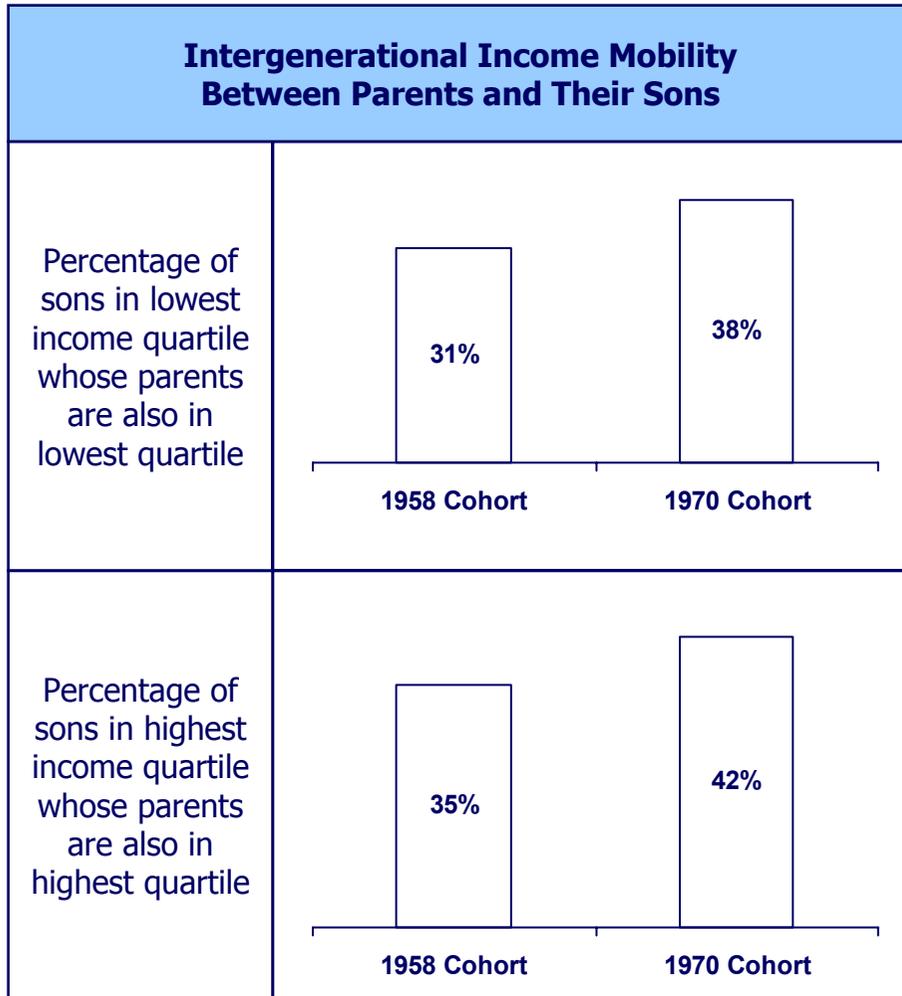
## For the Economy

- Reduces wasted talent and can lead to increased productivity and employment
- Improves post-16 participation in education and increases size of skilled workforce
- Contributes to higher economic growth and standards of living for all
- Reduces economic cost of social disengagement (crime, health etc)

## For Society

- Is consistent with greater equality of opportunity and promoting social justice
- Reduces educational and income inequality and increases sense of community
- Improves social cohesion with its concomitant benefits (reduced crime, civic engagement etc)

# Social mobility in the UK has declined, and remains low by international standards



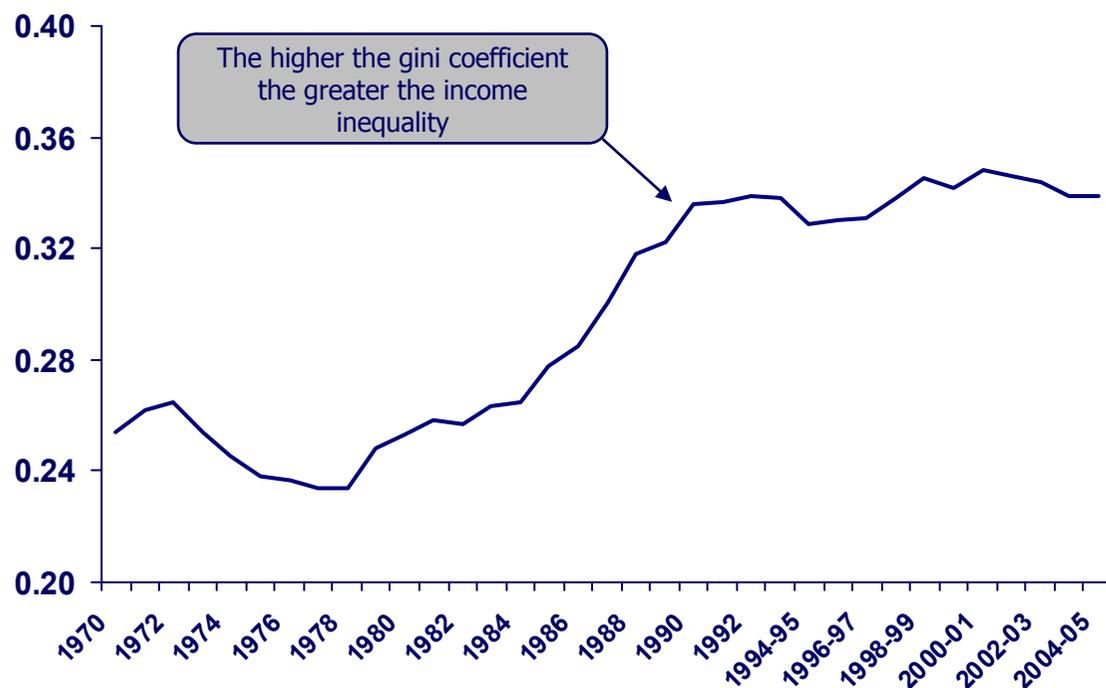
Comparison of Parent and Son Income Correlations for Selected Developed Countries <sup>(1)</sup>		
USA	0.289	Lower ↑ Social Mobility ↓ Higher
UK	0.271	
West Germany	0.171	
Finland	0.147	
Canada	0.143	
Denmark	0.143	
Sweden	0.143	
Norway	0.139	

<sup>(1)</sup> The correlation indicates the extent of the relationship between the income of parents and their sons. The closer the correlation is to zero, the less association between parental and son income, indicating higher social mobility. Note, the years when sons were born differs across countries.

Source: Blanden, Gregg and Machin (2005), *Intergenerational Mobility in Europe and North America*, Sutton Trust, LSE

## At the same time, income inequality has also increased significantly over the last three decades, though it has fallen over recent years

**The Gini Coefficient for Great Britain: 1970 – 2004/05**  
(Coefficient)



- Income inequality rose significantly over the past 30 years, particularly during the 1980s
- Levels of inequality have stabilised since the late 1990s, and fallen since 2000/01
- Excluding the extremes of the income distribution, inequality has generally been falling since 1997
- And income at the very top of the distribution (99<sup>th</sup> percentile) – which historically has risen faster than the rest – has been rising more slowly in recent years, consistent with a picture of falling inequality
- There is evidence<sup>(1)</sup> of an increasing link between family income and the level of educational attainment – children of more affluent families are more likely to remain in education for longer, and therefore achieve higher qualifications

(1) See Blanden, Gregg and Machin, *Intergenerational Mobility in Europe and North America*, Sutton Trust, 2005.

Source: IFS (2006) *Poverty and Inequality in Britain 2006*. Gini coefficient calculated using Before Housing Cost (BHC) incomes.

## Education can have a significant impact on a person's social mobility ...

---

- Research suggests that education accounts for around 35% to 40% of the relationship between a parent and their son's income – intergenerational income mobility
- And a person's own education is found to be an overwhelmingly important factor in driving the chances of being in the Managerial/Professional social class – more important than the effect of ethnicity and parental education – though parental education is itself a strong predictor of educational attainment
- But, education is not the only driver – for example, recruitment processes to the labour market and generic 'softer' skills such as 'communication' also matter – and there is some evidence to suggest that the role of education is decreasing over time

Source: Platt (2005) *Migration and Social Mobility*. JRF; based on data from ONS Longitudinal survey; Blanden, Gregg and Machin (2005) 'Intergenerational Mobility in Europe and North America', CEP and the Sutton Trust; Goldthorpe and Jackson (2006) 'Education-based Meritocracy: The Barriers to its Realisation', paper presented at the Russell Sage Foundation conference on Social Class, New York, April 21-22, 2006.

# ... therefore our approach to social mobility focuses on reducing attainment gaps between different social groups

---

## Rationale for DfES's Approach to Social Mobility

---

### *Social Mobility for DfES ...*

Social mobility is about narrowing the gap in levels of educational attainment between learners with parents/carers from different social groups, whilst simultaneously raising overall attainment

It focuses on attainment gaps over the educational lifecycle of an individual learner, including in adulthood

This does not mean that only educational issues are relevant. Non-educational interventions, such as protective care and those that reduce teenage pregnancy also play an important role in contributing to reductions in the social class attainment gap

There is a strong link between educational attainment and life outcomes

For example:

- Higher workforce participation
- Higher earnings
- Better health outcomes
- Better social outcomes



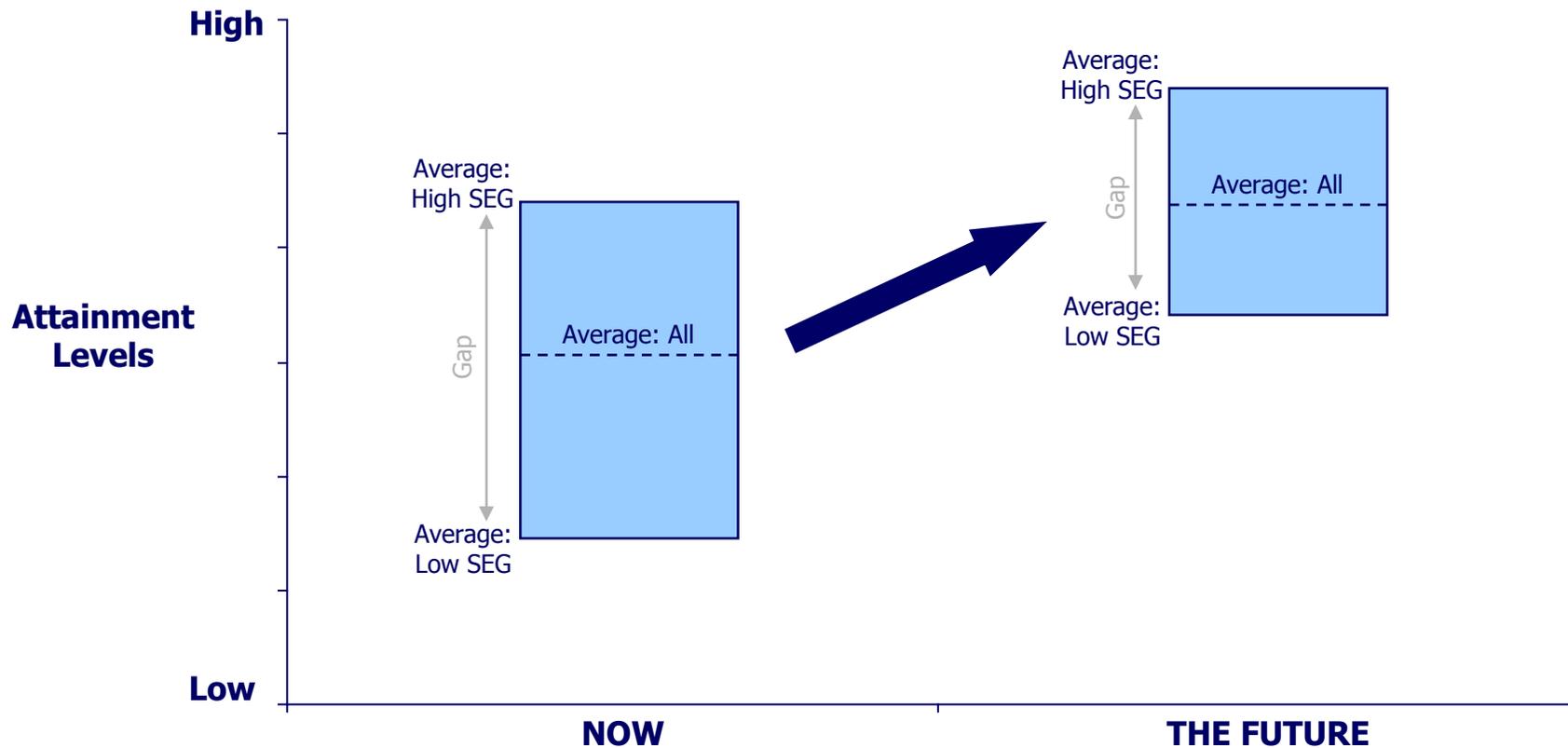
Reducing educational attainment gaps for learners from lower Socioeconomic groups (SEGs), increases their chances of better life outcomes, which in turn should increase their ability to achieve upward social mobility



DfES has most capacity to affect the attainment gap – so this is its prime focus. Its responsibility extends beyond education to the well-being of children and young people

# Creating a high-performance/high-equity system: reducing the attainment gap and increasing the average level of attainment

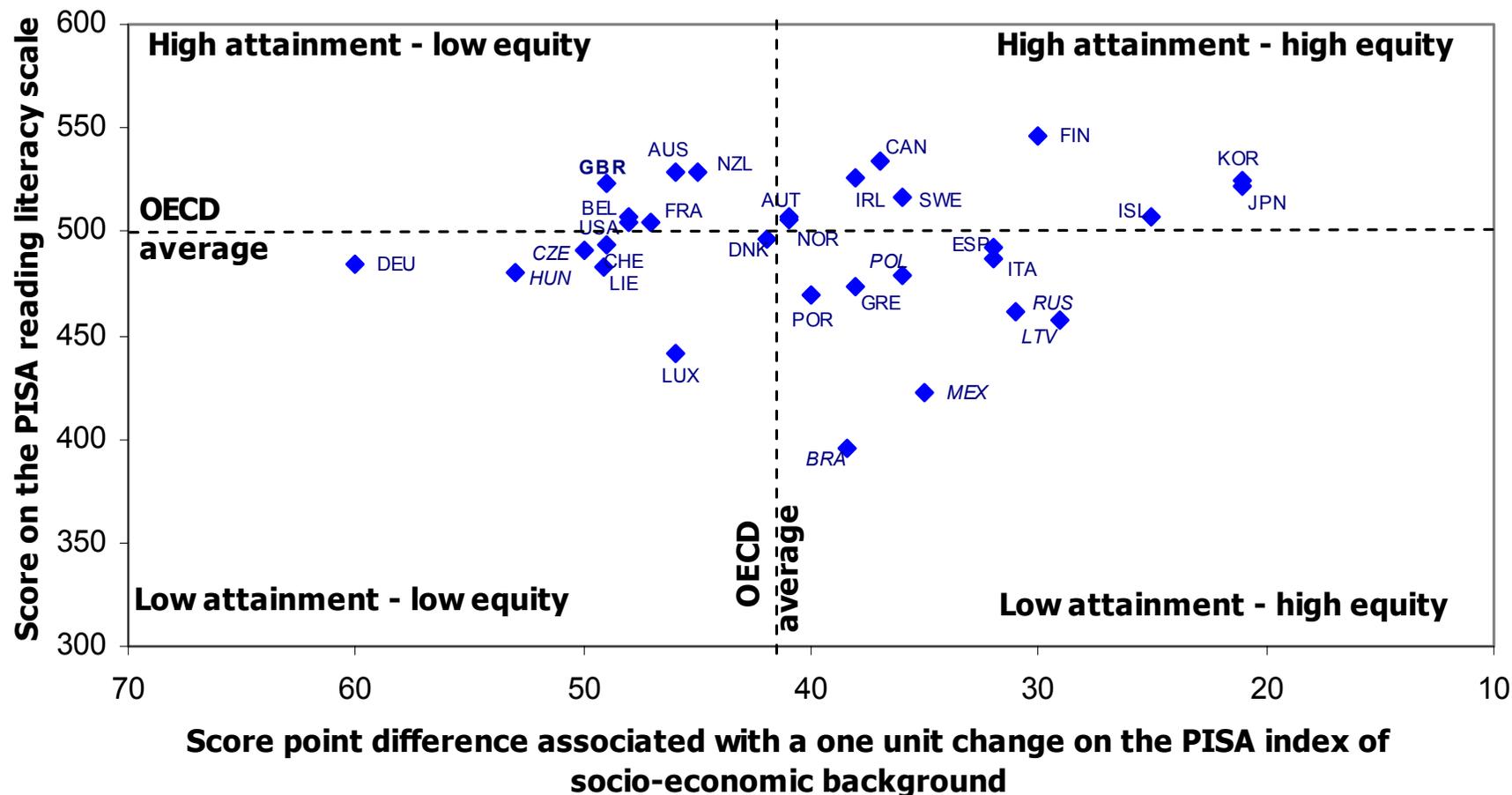
## Educational Attainment Levels in England: Present and Future (Indicative Only)



**Achieving both of those objectives simultaneously is challenging**

# Other countries' experience confirms the nature of the challenge, and shows that this issue is not unique to the UK

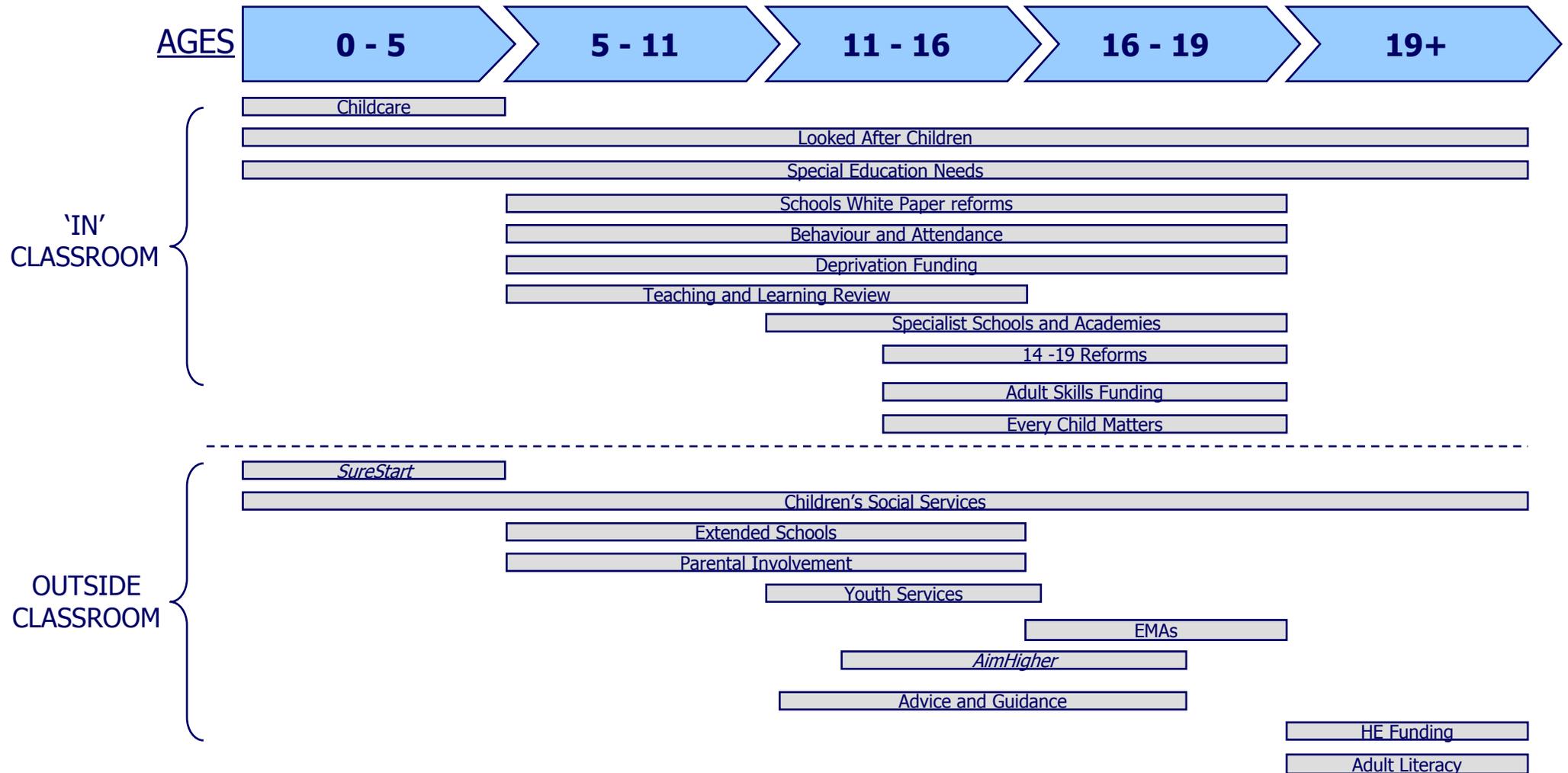
Relationship between the average performance of participating countries on the PISA reading literacy scale and the socio-economic gap in student performance: 2000



Source: Education Policy Analysis (2002) OECD. The PISA index of socio-economic background is a composite index created on the basis of the International Index Socio-Economic Index of Occupational Status; parental education; index of family wealth; index of home educational resources; and the index of possessions related to "classical" culture in the family home

# The Government has in place, or in train, many initiatives that are seeking to address social class disadvantages

## Examples of DfES Initiatives Aimed at Addressing Social Disadvantage Across the Age Ranges



# Contents

---

PART A: What does 'social mobility' mean for the DFES?

**PART B: What is the attainment gap and what is happening to it?**

PART C: What are the key drivers of the gap, and what do we know about what might narrow it?

PART D: How might current policies contribute to narrowing the gap?

- Early years ages 0-5
- School ages 5-19
- Ages 19+

PART E: Challenges and priorities

## What do we mean by the social class attainment gap?

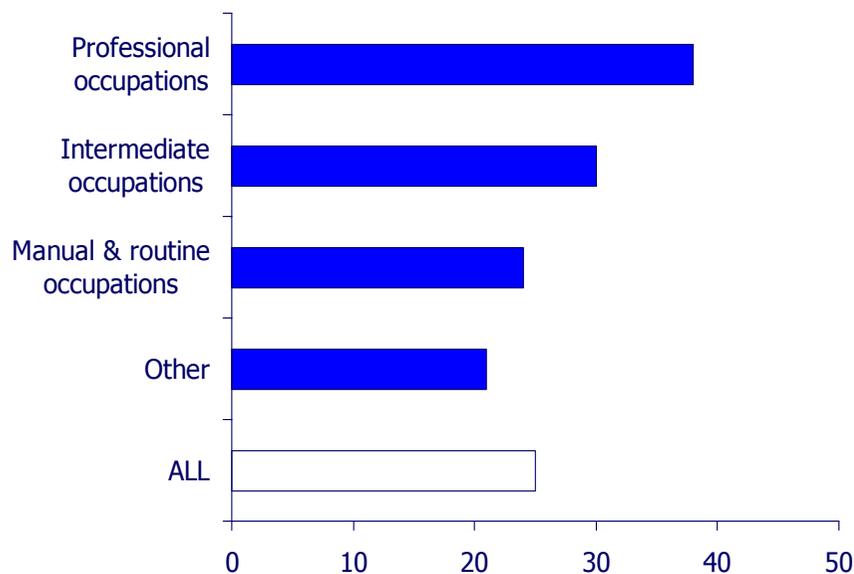
---

- We define the term 'social class attainment gap' to include *any difference, at any stage of the education system, in levels of attainment or educational outcomes for children, young people and adults from different socio-economic groups*
- There is currently no consistent measure of social class for the entire life cycle of learning as we rely on a number of different datasets. This makes it difficult to monitor progress across the system:
  - **Early years:** we have measures of neighbourhood disadvantage and parental socioeconomic status
  - **Compulsory education:** we have pupils' Free School Meal (FSM) status – we record pupils known to be eligible for and receiving FSM – currently around 15% of all students
  - **Post-16:** we use parental or own occupational classification as given by the NS-SEC
- While these materials regularly focus on FSM status, its limitations should be noted:
  - FSM is a measure of household income deprivation, specifically benefit dependence, rather than occupational status
  - FSM is a binary measure, meaning that variations within FSM/non-FSM groups are lost. And some families will be eligible for FSM but choose not to receive it
  - The share of FSM students has fallen in recent years – the effect of this on the attainment gap is ambiguous as it depends on the attainment of pupils at the margins of FSM eligibility as well as the overall spread of attainment
- There is a need for further work to develop the data and measurement of social class in this area

# Analysis of other proxy measures for social class highlights the limitations of the FSM measure

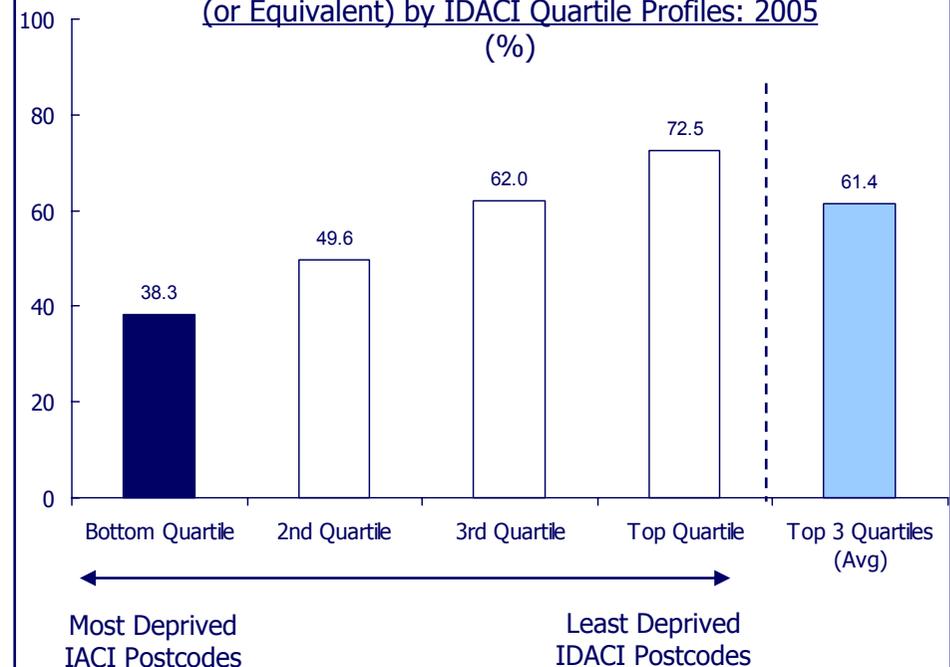
The Youth Cohort Study (YCS) shows that even within FSM groups, there are differences in attainment depending on social class

FSM Pupils' GCSE Results by Parents' Social Class: 2003  
(% Achieving 5+ A\*-C, English mainstream maintained schools)



The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) provides an alternative illustration of the social class attainment gap to FSM ... but confirms that there is a considerable social class attainment gap

% Achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSEs  
(or Equivalent) by IDACI Quartile Profiles: 2005  
(%)



Note: IDACI is a subset of the Income Deprivation Domain and comprises the percentage of an Super Output Area's children under 16 who were living in families in receipt of income support and Job Seeker's Allowance (IB) or in families in receipt of WFTC/DPTC whose equivalised income is below 60% of median income before housing costs.

Source: YCS, unpublished; ODP, (2004), 'Indices of Deprivation'

# Not all pupils receiving FSM are in a deprived school or from a deprived area

## Segmentation of 2005 Key Stage 4 Pupils

Segment	Attributes			% of Total Cohort	% Achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs: 2005 (including English & Maths)
	FSM	In a Deprived School <sup>(1)</sup>	From a Deprived Area <sup>(2)</sup>		
1	✓	✓	✓	3	17.2
2	✓	✓		2	19.5
3	✓		✓	2	17.6
4	✓			6	21.7
5		✓	✓	3	23.9
6		✓		5	31.2
7			✓	5	28.9
8				74	51.1
<b>ALL</b>				<b>100</b> <b>(n=578,663)</b>	<b>44.1</b>

## Conclusions ...

- Nearly half of pupils receiving FSM do not go to a deprived school or live in a deprived area. Area-based targeting will therefore miss a large proportion of deprived pupils
- Looking at attainment, all FSM segments have lower attainment than non-FSM segments
- Pupils in segment 1 - who receive FSM, live in deprived areas and attend the most deprived schools - have the lowest levels of attainment
- Non-FSM pupils who are from deprived areas have lower attainment than non-FSM pupils who do not

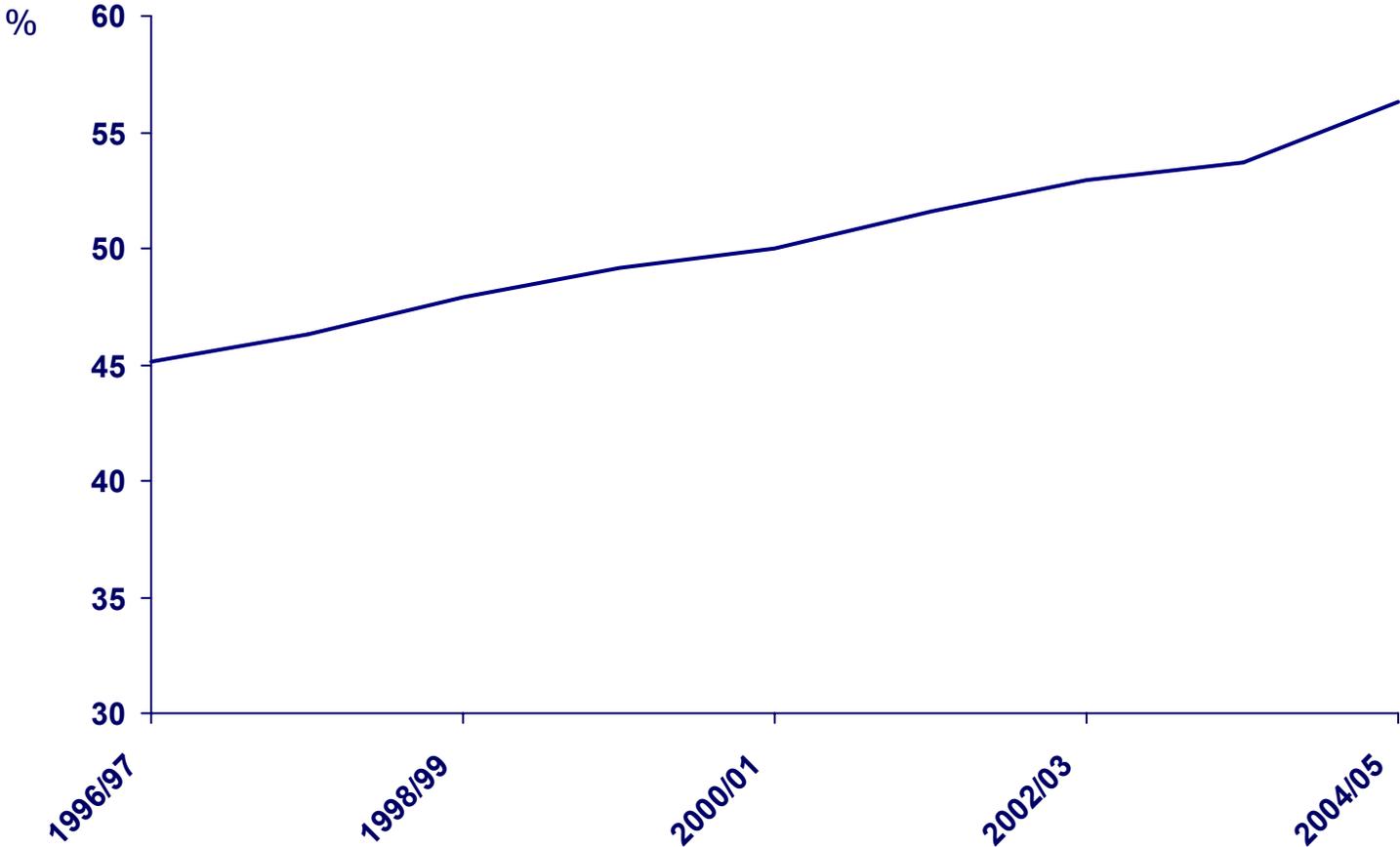
(1) Schools with high proportions of FSM pupils (>30% of pupils receive FSM).

(2) Most deprived IDACI postcodes (>45% of children in postcode are in families in receipt of benefits).

Source: PLASC 2005. Data is for maintained mainstream schools; pupils with known FSM status, school FSM and IDACI, unpublished.

# There has been continuous improvement in GCSE attainment in recent years

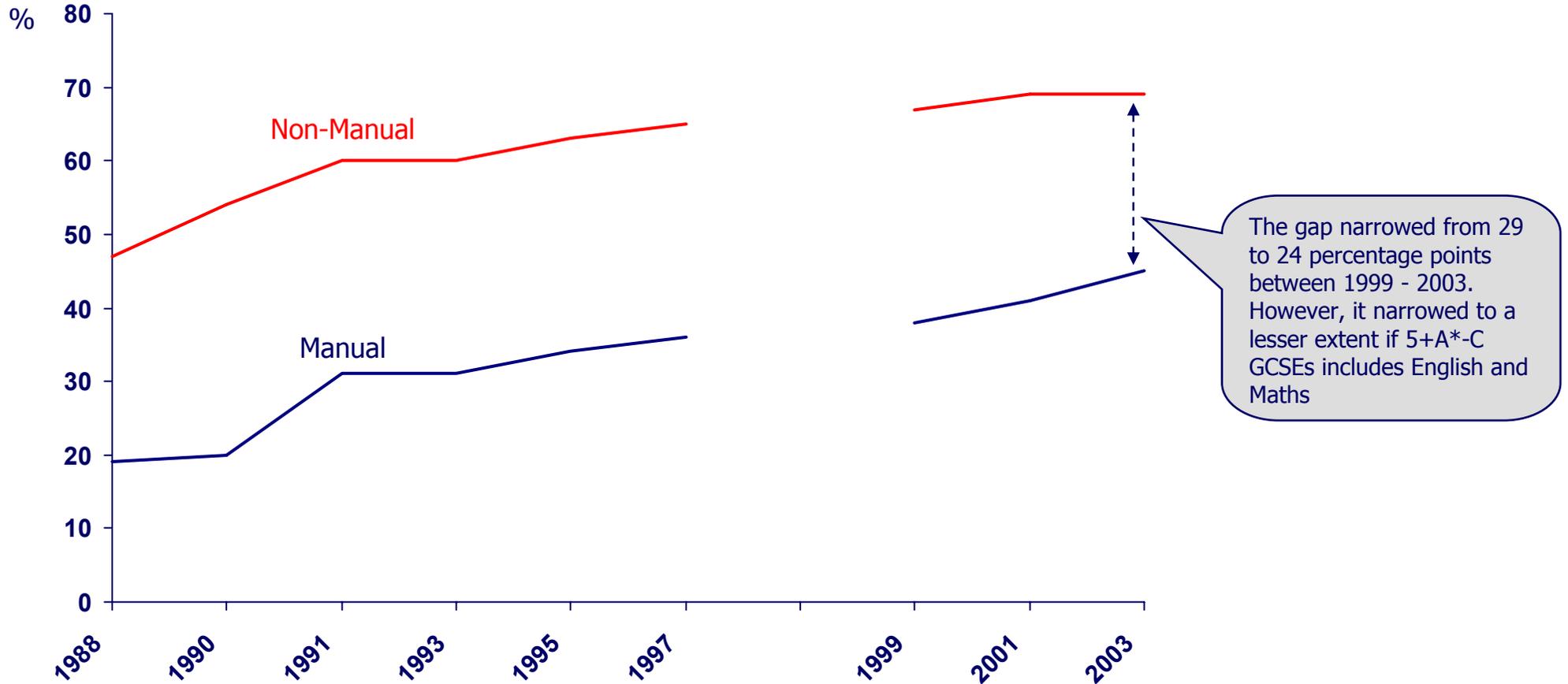
**Percentage of 15 Year Old Pupils Achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSEs: 1988/9-2004/5 (%)**



Source: DfES, Trends in Education and Skills.

# There is evidence of a persistent social class attainment gap at GCSE, though it has narrowed since 1999

**Percentage of Cohort Achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSEs by Parents' Social Class: 1988-2003**  
(%)

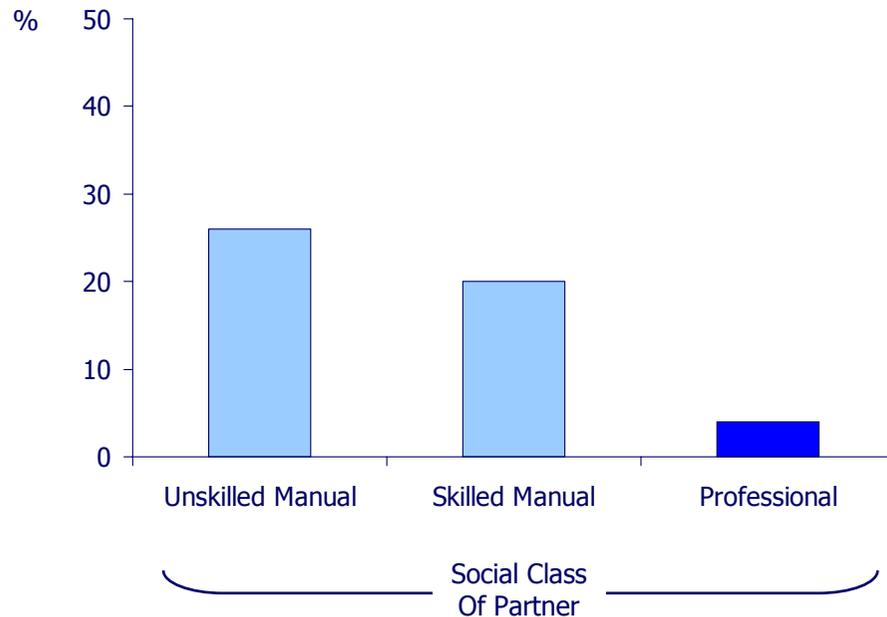


Note: Discontinuity exists between 1997 - 1999 because of a change in the classification of social class from SEG to NSSEC. Manual and non-manual categories have been constructed by grouping more detailed breakdown of social class groups. The 'other' group has been excluded from the analysis

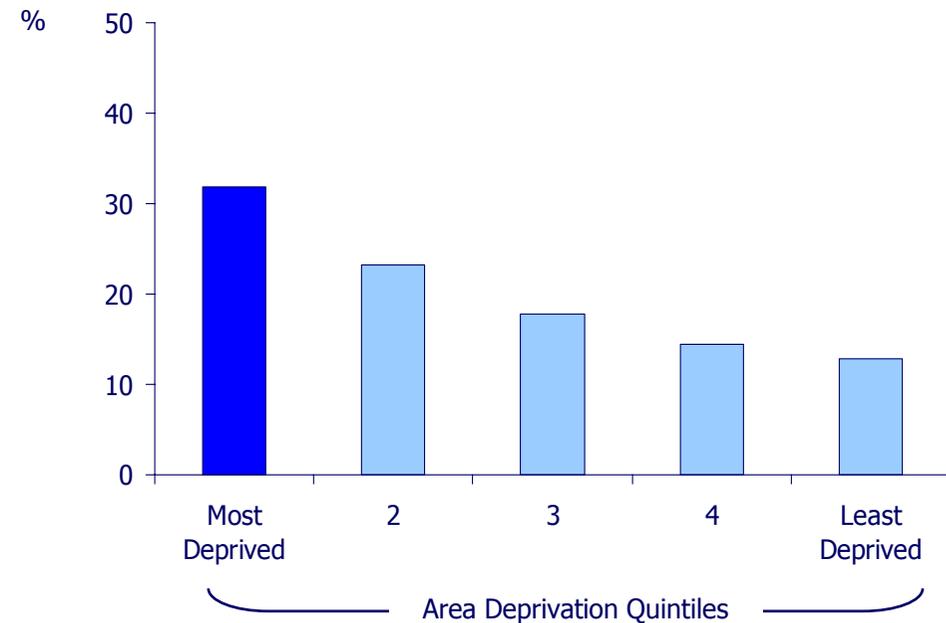
Source: DfES internal analysis, Youth Cohort Study cohorts 4-12, sweep 1

# Differences in early environment by social class are evident even before birth

Mothers who continued to smoke during pregnancy by social class of partner, UK: 2000 (%)



Single births defined as 'very low birthweight' (<1500g) by area deprivation quintile, England: 1996-2000 combined (%)



**Factors such as very low birthweight and mother smoking during pregnancy are associated with lower attainment later on**

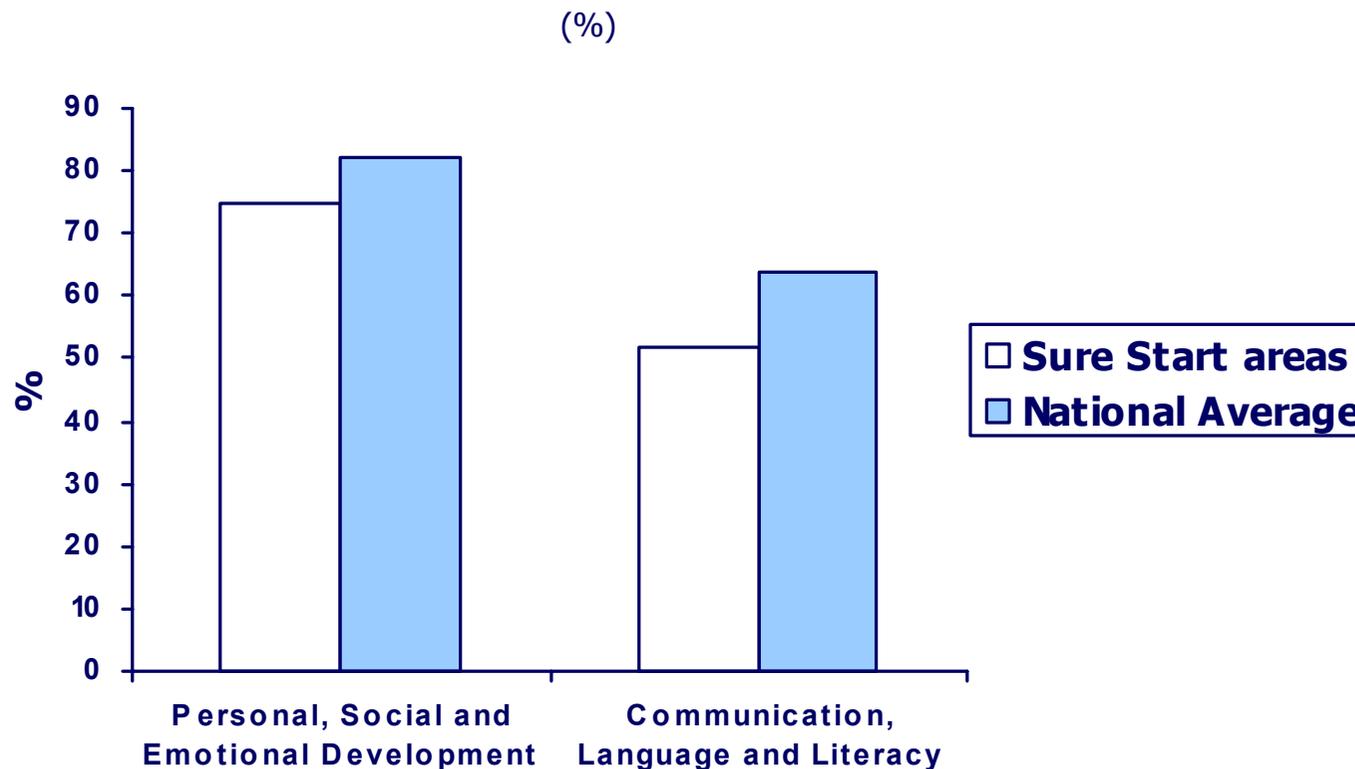
Source: 'The Health of Children and Young People', (2004), Office for National Statistics

# There is evidence of a social class attainment gap at Foundation Stage

**Foundation Stage is a distinct education phase for children aged 3 to the end of the reception year of primary school (when children are generally 5 years of age)**

A 'good' level of development for these skills is based on the percentage of 5-year-olds achieving total scores of 24 or above in the Communication, Language and Literacy Area of Learning, and 18 or above in the Personal, Social and Emotional Development Area of Learning.

Percentage of 5 year olds achieving a 'good' level of development by the end of Foundation Stage in schools in Sure Start areas compared with all schools in England (national average): 2005

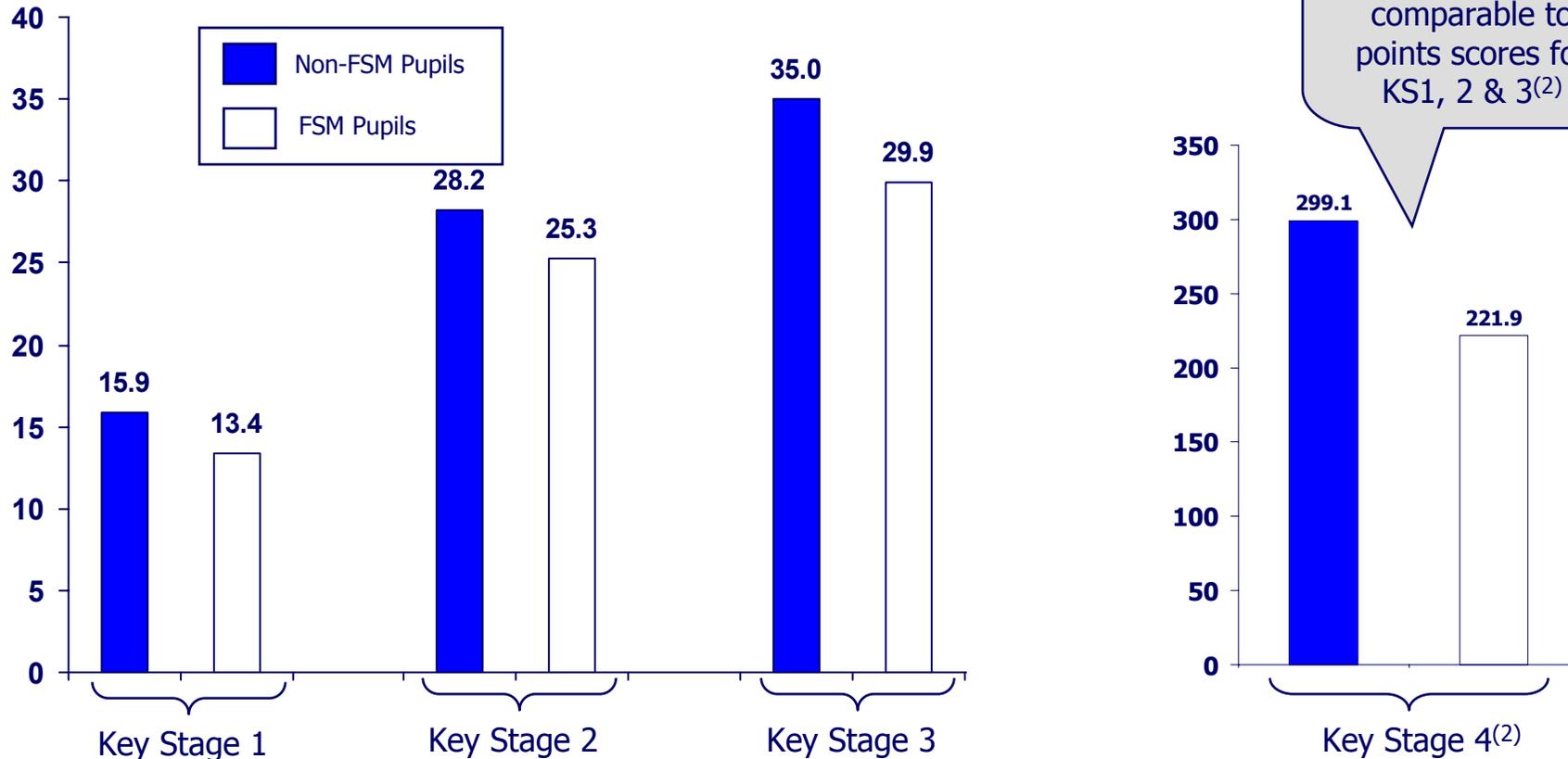


Note: Chart shows area-level measure of deprivation - Sure Start areas are more deprived than the bottom 20% of wards in England. We do not currently have social class data at the individual level at the Foundation Stage.

Source: Sure Start survey 2005, unpublished; 'National Evaluation of Sure Start', (2005)

# The attainment gap is similarly evident at pupil-level across all Key Stages in School

**Average Point Score for Pupils by Free School Meal (FSM) Status for Key Stages 1 to 4: 2005<sup>(1)</sup>**  
(Points)



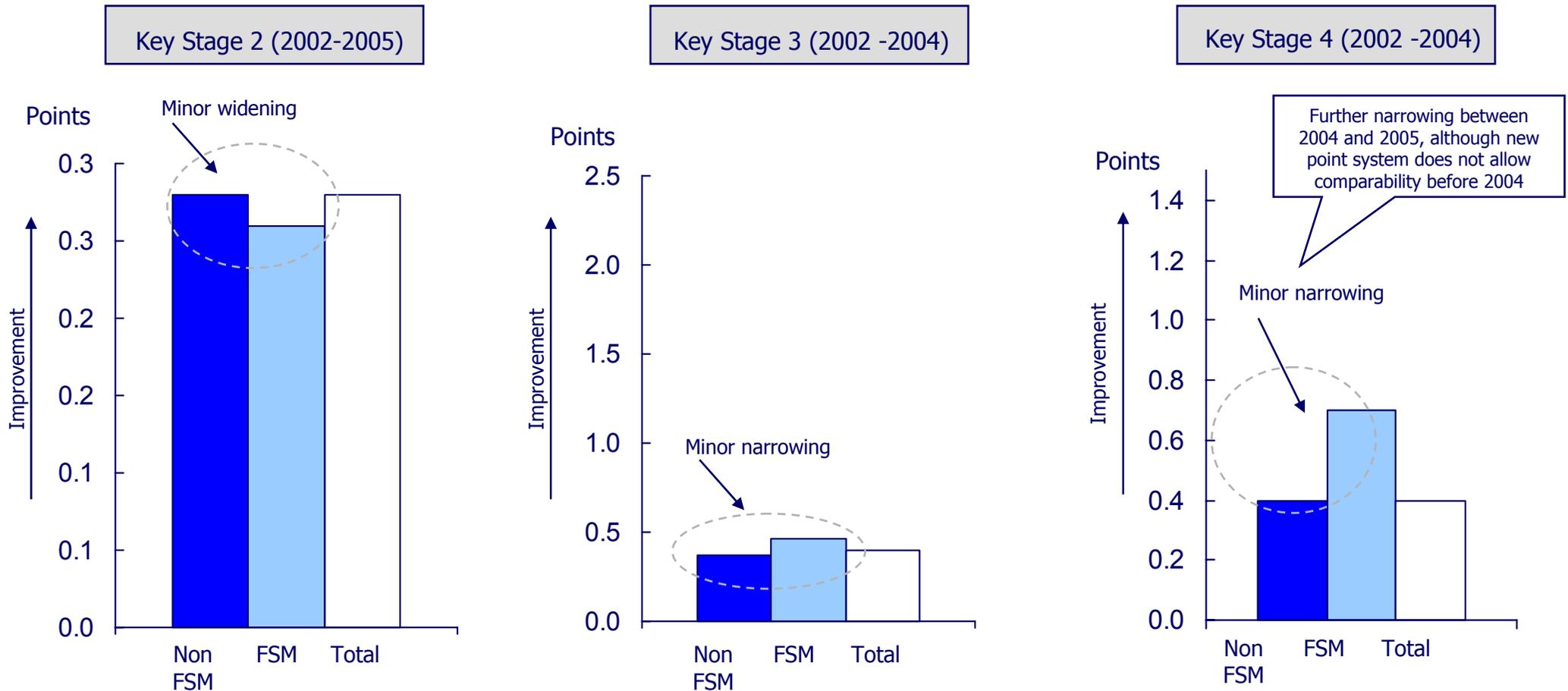
(1) Pupils are tested at different subjects at different KS levels

(2) For KS1-3, 1 point equals ~1 term's progress while at KS4 6 points represents 1 grade in 1 subject. For KS2 and 3, the Average Point Score (APS) is derived from each pupil's national curriculum test levels in English, maths and science. For KS4, APS is derived from the grades achieved in each pupil's best 8 subjects at GCSE or equivalent.

Source: Internal Analysis using PLASC data. All data is for Maintained Mainstream Schools (Unpublished)

# In recent years there have been attainment improvements for all groups in Key Stages 2 to 4, with a slight narrowing of the gap at KS3 and KS4

**Change in Average Point Score<sup>(1)</sup> for Pupils by Free School Meal (FSM) Status for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 (Points)<sup>(2)</sup>**

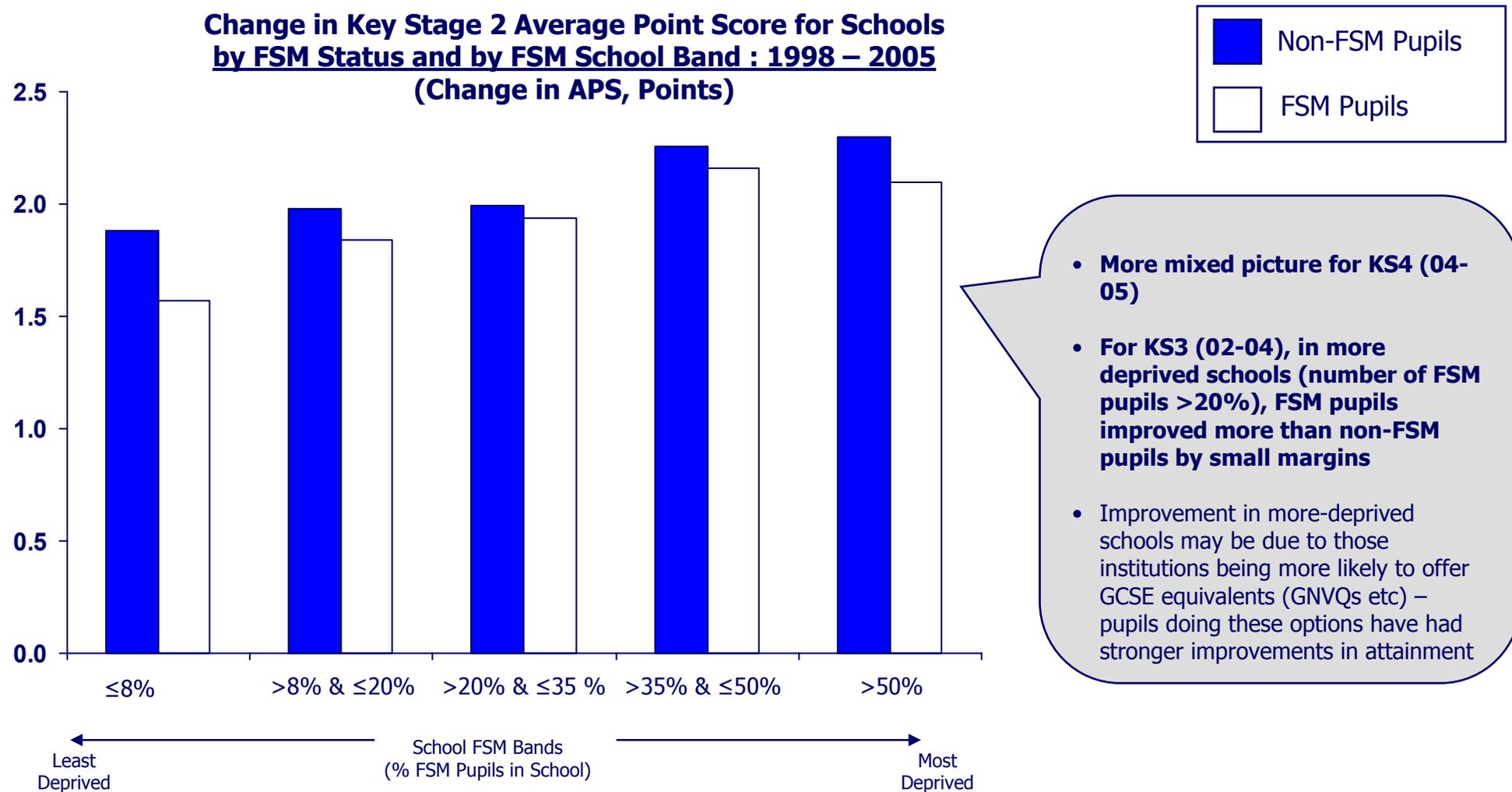


(1) For KS2 and 3, 1 point equals ~1 term's progress while at KS4, 1 point represents 1 grade in 1 subject. For KS2 and 3, the Average point score (APS) is derived from each pupil's national curriculum test levels in English, maths and science. Years used for time-series comparisons differ between Key Stages because of data constraints

Source: Internal Analysis using PLASC data, All Data is for Maintained Mainstream Schools. (Unpublished)

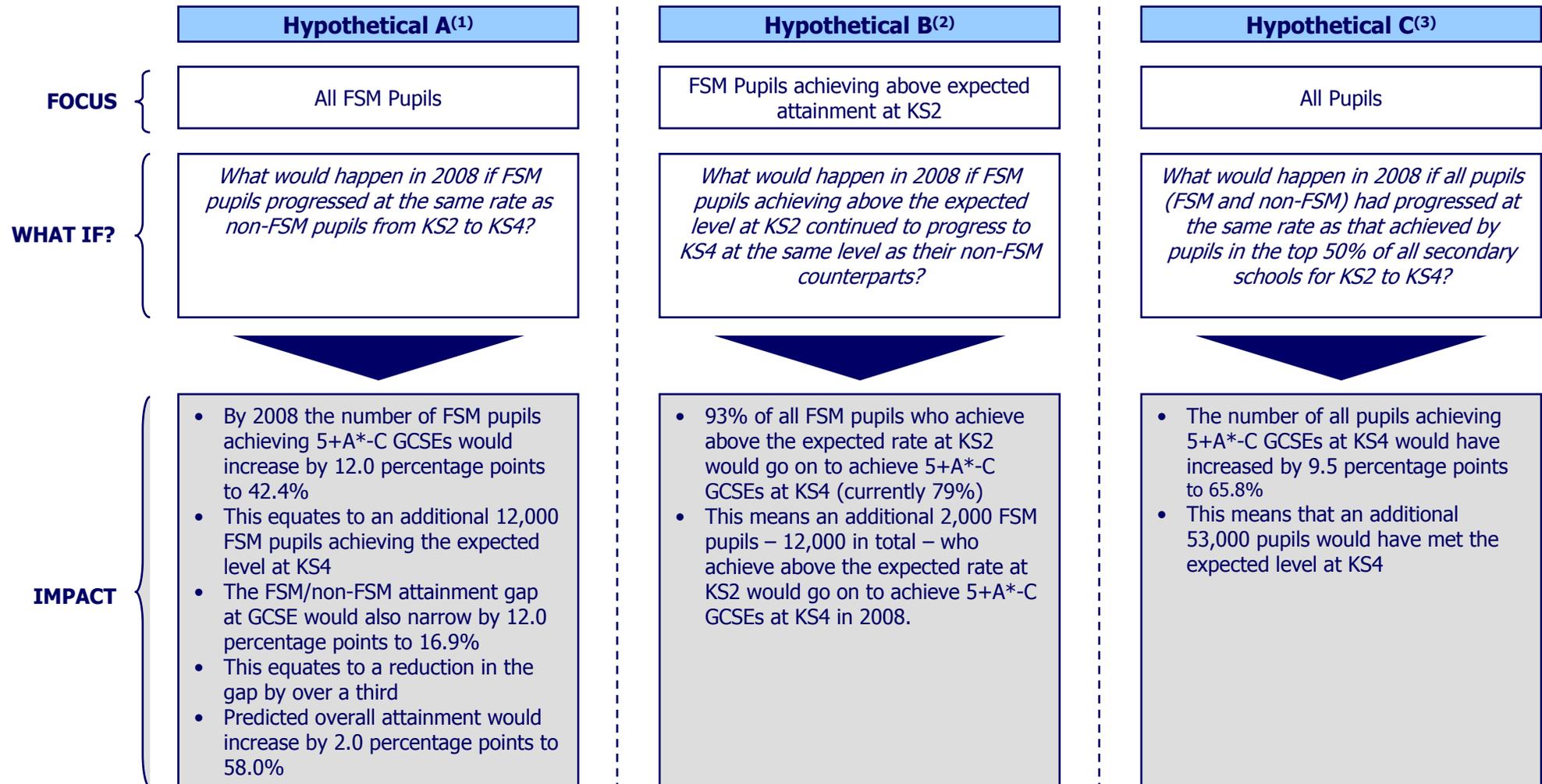


# ... however it was non-FSM pupils who improved most in each schools FSM band



Source: Internal analysis using PLASC data, All data is for maintained mainstream schools For KS2 and 3, the APS is derived from each pupil's national curriculum test levels in English, maths and science. For KS4, APS is derived from the grades achieved in each pupil's best 8 subjects at GCSE or equivalent. **Unpublished**

# Three different hypotheticals provide some indication of the potential impact of improvement (I)



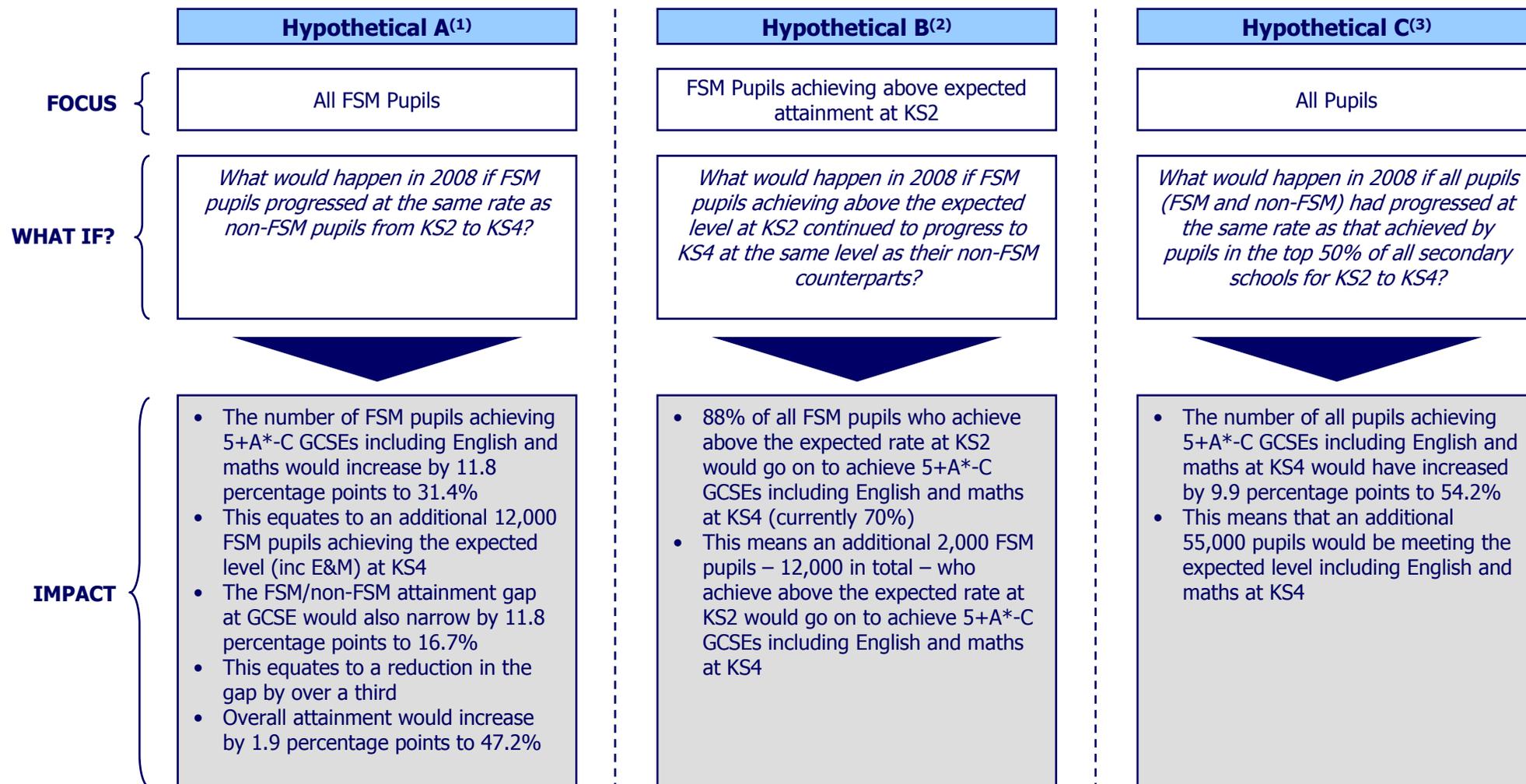
(1) Using matched KS2 2000 to KS4 2005 transitions of pupil progress and applying them to KS2 2003 distributions.

(2) Using matched KS2 2000 to KS4 2005 transitions of pupil progress and applying them to KS2 2003 distributions.

(3) Applying transitions for KS2 2000 to KS4 2005 based on the top 50% of schools, as assessed by KS2-4 'value-added' scores, to all KS2 2003 pupils to predict KS4 2008 attainment.

Source: Internal Analysis using National Pupil Database and PLASC data. (Unpublished)

# Three different hypotheticals provide some indication of the potential impact of improvement (II - including English and Maths)



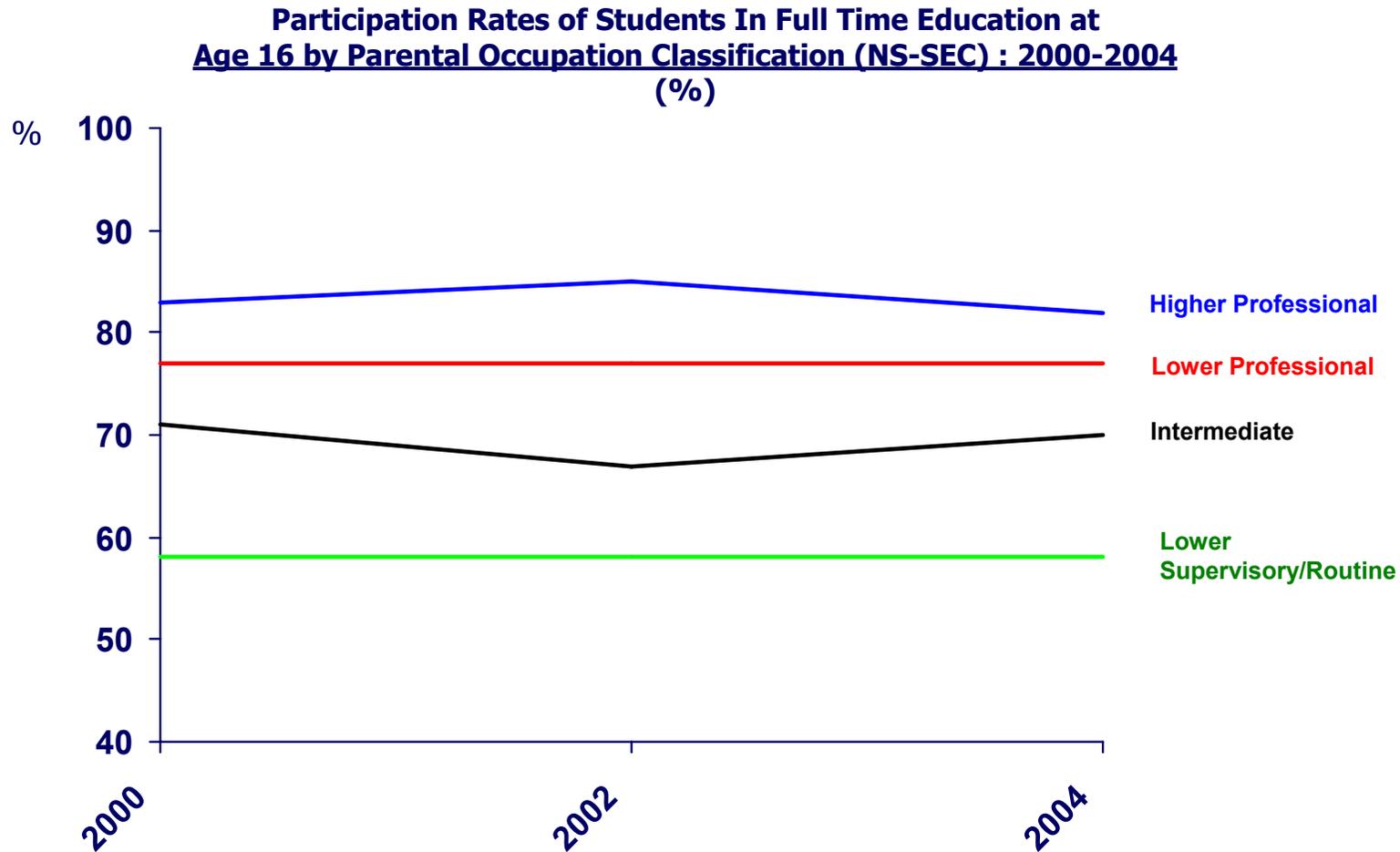
(1) Using matched KS2 2000 to KS4 2005 transitions of pupil progress and applying them to KS2 2003 distributions.

(2) Using matched KS2 2000 to KS4 2005 transitions of pupil progress and applying them to KS2 2003 distributions.

(3) Applying transitions for KS2 2000 to KS4 2005 based on the top 50% of schools, as assessed by KS2-4 'value-added' scores, to all KS2 2003 pupils to predict KS4 2008 attainment.

Source: Internal Analysis using National Pupil Database and PLASC data. (Unpublished)

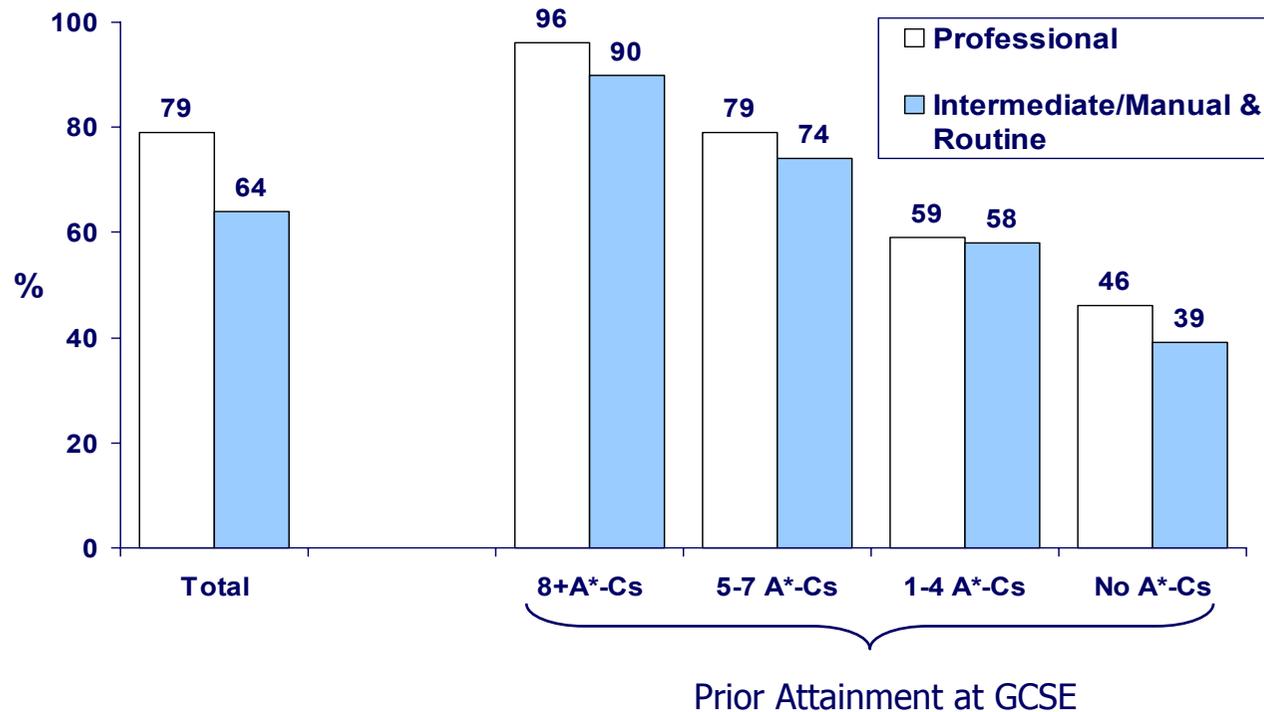
# Post-16 there is a significant and sustained social class gap in participation in full-time education



Source: YCS, Cohorts 10-12, English mainstream maintained schools, participation in spring of year shown, year 11 previous year

# Prior attainment explains much of the post-16 participation gap, but not all of it

**Proportion in FT Education at 16 by Year 11 Attainment and Parental Occupation Classification (NS-SEC): 2003 (%)**

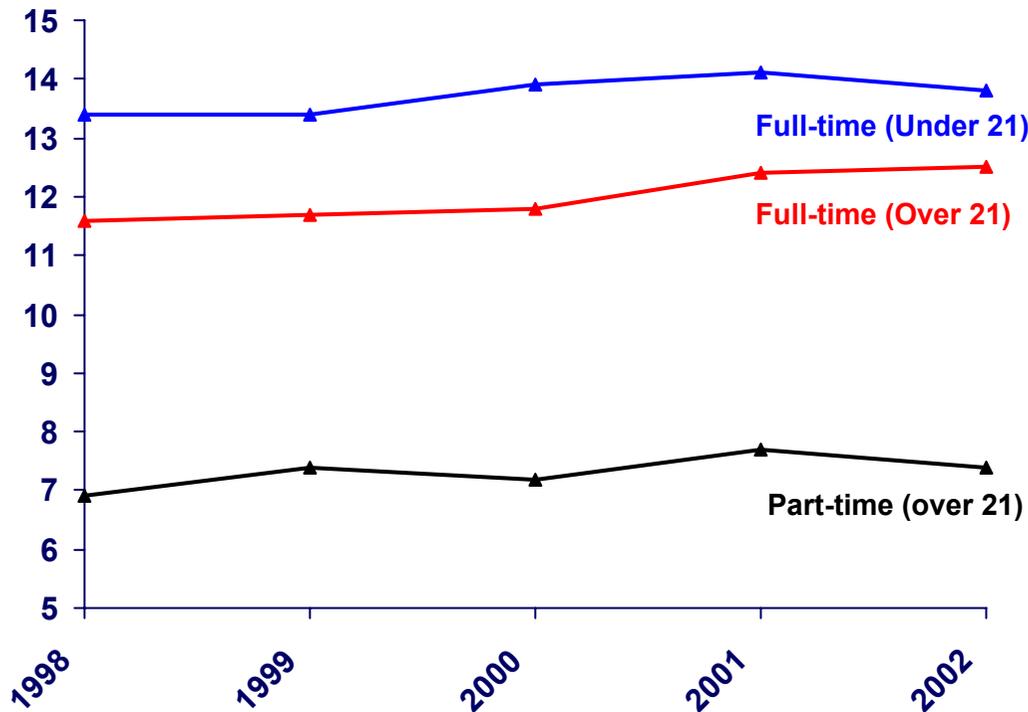


- This chart shows that prior attainment explains much of the social class gap in participation post-16, though not all.
- For example, Goldthorpe<sup>(1)</sup> found that higher A level participation rates for the top social classes were not just due to higher attainment, but also because of a **higher propensity to participate** for a given level of attainment
- Goldthorpe estimates that these effects account for around 25% of the difference in A level participation between the higher and lower classes

Sources: Youth Cohort Study, Cohort 12, spring 2004 (yr 11 results 2003) English mainstream maintained schools; (1) Goldthorpe *et al* (2005) "On class differentials in educational attainment" *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*

# In Higher Education, there have been slow improvements in the mix of students

**Percentage of 'New' Entrants to Higher Education from Low Participation Neighbourhoods: 1998-2002 (%)**

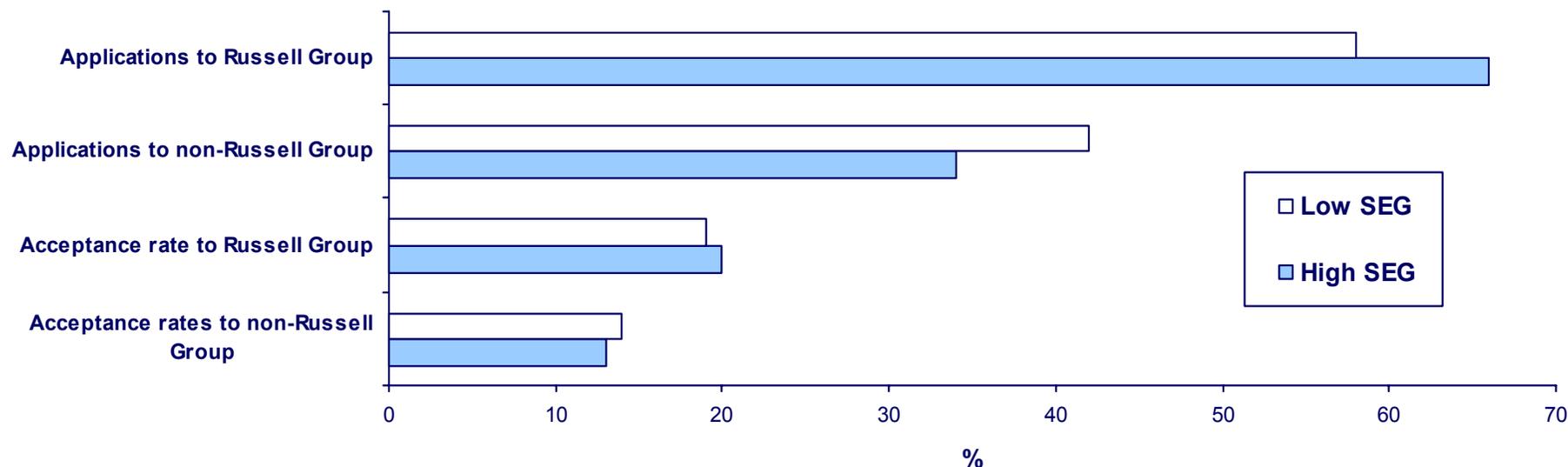


The weight of evidence about the importance of prior attainment suggests that major improvements in the socioeconomic mix in HE will be dependent on changes earlier in the system

Source: HEFCE/ HESA performance indicators; not available prior to 1998 entry; part-timers under 21 omitted as absolute numbers are very small. Indicators supplied are for England only.

# Aspirations are important - high achieving young people from lower SEGs are still less likely to apply to HE institutions with the highest economic returns

**Application and Acceptance Rates via UCAS for Students with 30+ A-Level Points: 2001**  
(%)



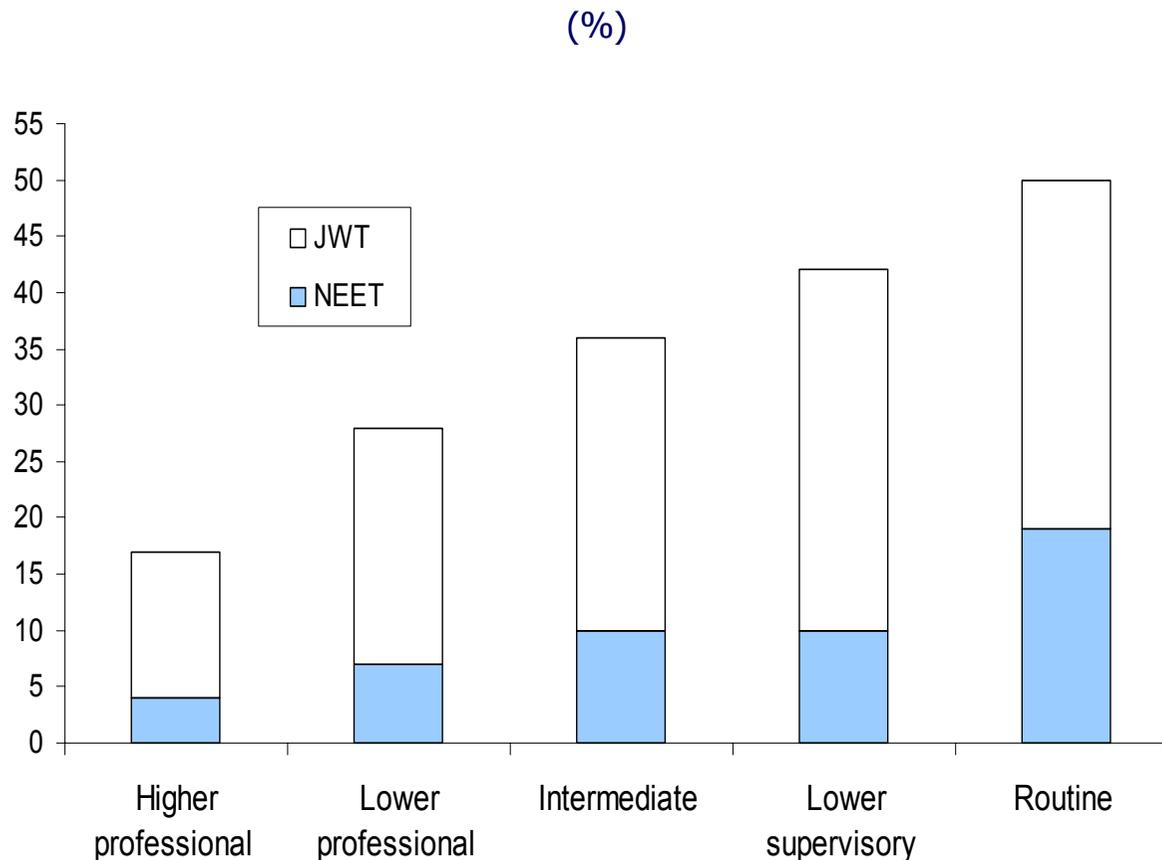
- High achieving young people from lower SEGs are less likely to apply to Russell Group universities, despite the fact that they are just as likely to be accepted as people from higher SEGs
- Yet Russell Group universities have the highest economic returns. Research estimates that there is an earnings premium for males of up to 6% from attending a Russell Group university compared to a Modern university

Note: The members of the Russell Group are as follows: University of Birmingham, University of Bristol, University of Cambridge, Cardiff University, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Leeds, University of Liverpool, University of Manchester, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, University of Nottingham, University of Oxford, University of Sheffield, University of Southampton, University of Warwick, Imperial College, King's College London, London School of Economics and University College London.

Sources: Analysis of 2001 UCAS data, from the DfES publication "Widening Participation in HE"; Chevalier and Conlon, (2003), 'Does it pay to attend a prestigious university?'

# Young adults from lower socioeconomic groups are more likely to be not in education, employment or training, or in a job without training

Proportion of 19 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) or in jobs without training (JWT) by parental occupation: 2005



**A job without training (JWT) is preferable to NEET but is still unlikely to lead to progression to more qualifications**

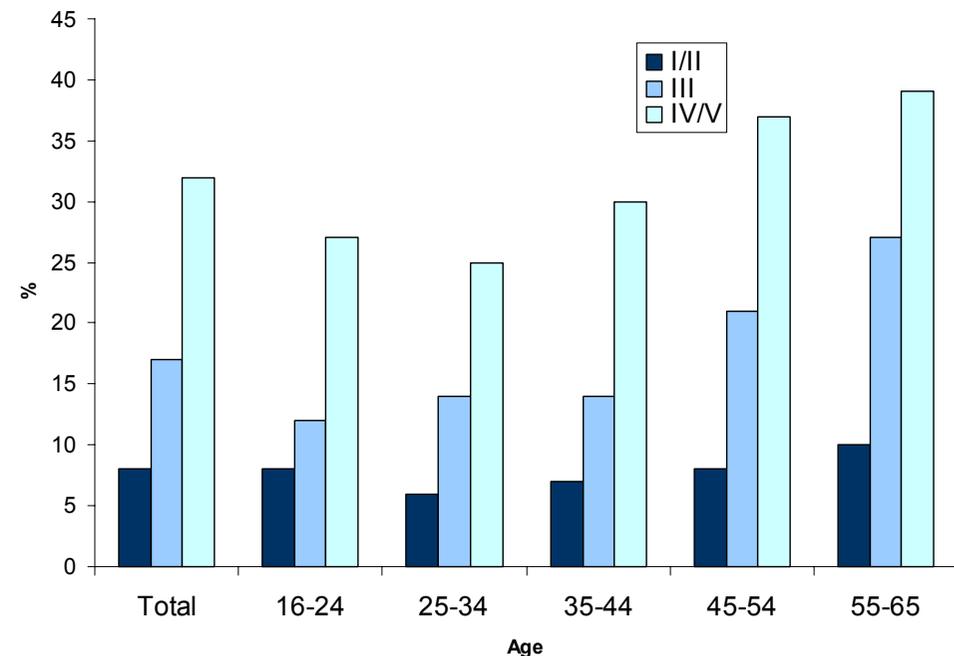
- JWT are generally poorly paid and low skill
- Young people in JWT are equipped to learn – prior qualifications equivalent to those in part time work – but don't
- Qualifications are a key way to increase earnings, and hence improve social mobility prospects

Source: YCS cohort 11, 2005, DfES SFR49/2005

# There is evidence of a smaller social class gap in basic skills for young adults compared to older adults

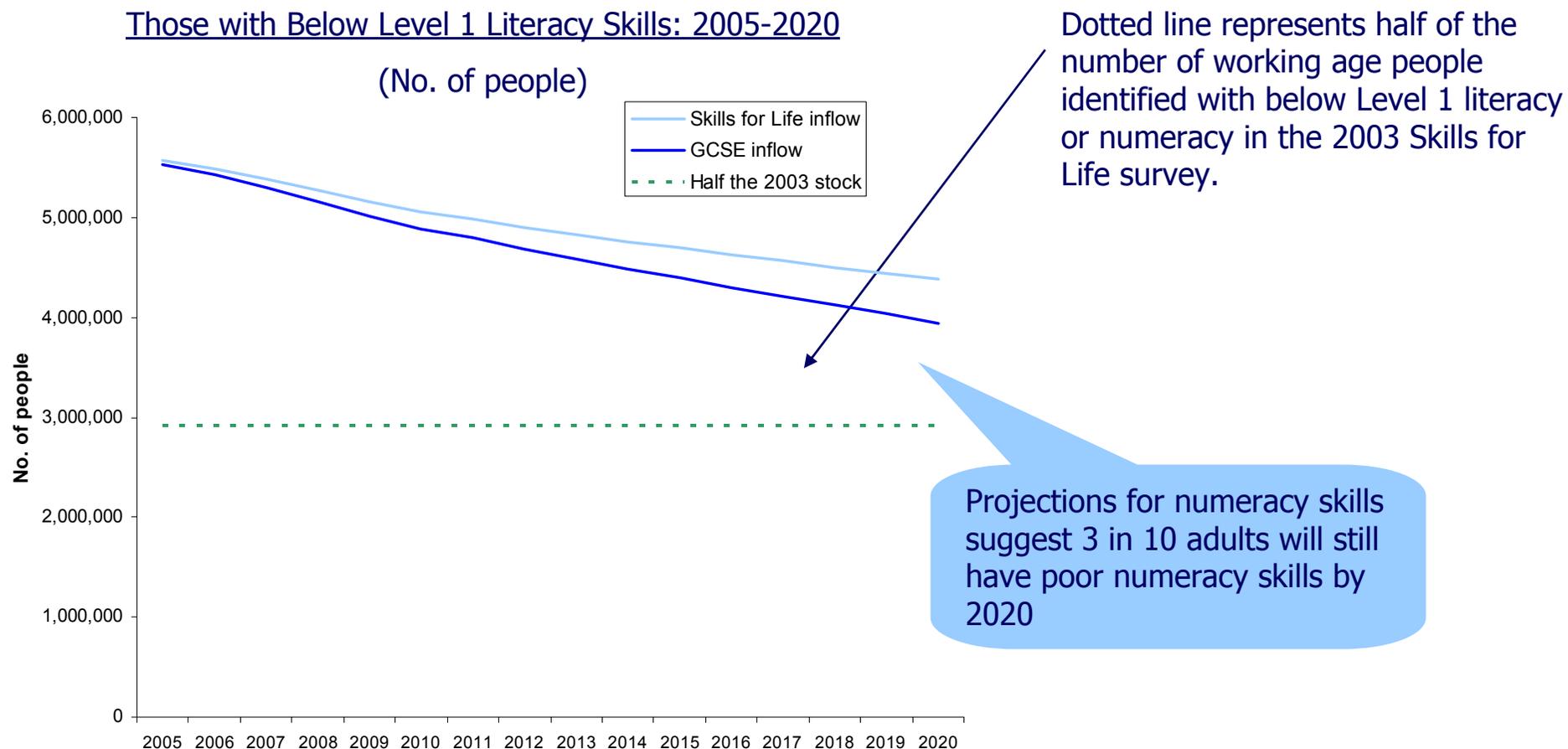
- Increased intra-generational mobility depends on significant uptake of basic skill and Level 2 qualifications from the lowest occupation classes
- Survey evidence suggests that people from lower socioeconomic groups are less likely to participate in learning - 47% of those in unskilled manual occupations reported some learning in 2002 compared to 88% of those in professional and managerial occupations
- And the evidence suggests participation is not on an upward trajectory - uptake will not be enough to have a significant impact on the gap
- There is also evidence of a small widening of the social class gap in literacy skills by age (see chart)

Literacy Entry Level 3 and below by age and social class: 2002 (%)



Source: Skills for Life Survey, National Adult Learning Survey 2002, Byner et al (2001) using NCDS and BCS

# We must continue to raise basic skills



Source: Leitch Review skill projection models

# Contents

---

PART A: What does 'social mobility' mean for the DFES?

PART B: What is the attainment gap and what is happening to it?

**PART C: What are the key drivers of the gap, and what do we know about what might narrow it?**

PART D: How might current policies contribute to narrowing the gap?

- Early years ages 0-5
- School ages 5-19
- Ages 19+

PART E: Challenges and priorities

## Summary (I)

---

- Social class attainment gaps are a product of a pupils' family background (and other social factors), their individual characteristics and educational factors. The weight of evidence suggests that the former two groups of factors are the most significant drivers of attainment gaps.
- A range of family characteristics appear to matter, with parental expectations and involvement in the child's education being particularly critical. However, there are limits on the extent to which government can directly affect these factors through policy interventions.
- An individual's prior attainment has a very significant impact on later attainment. However it is also the case that pupils receiving FSM fall back at each stage of education for a given level of attainment. This compounding of gaps across the education lifecycle suggests that both early intervention and sustained support is very important.
- A pupil's individual characteristics – for example, educational needs or ethnicity – can also help explain attainment gaps. Understanding what works to address these is important to inform how we should intervene to improve social class attainment gaps
- There is evidence that particular educational interventions can have a positive impact, for example school resources, school type, curriculum, classroom organisation and policies that focus on the basics.
- School types and 'whole-school' interventions may have some impact on reducing the gap. New analysis of schools' progress taking into account prior attainment and other pupil characteristics, suggests that more deprived pupils in some schools make more progress than their equivalents in other schools (although it does not prove a casual link).
- Post-16, there are benefits to gaining Level 2 qualifications for individuals who leave school without any qualification, both in terms of future earnings and employment rates.

## Summary (II)

---

From the analysis, it is possible to identify a number of key elements that should underpin any strategy to narrow the social class attainment gap. This will also assist in assessing the effectiveness of the policies the Department has in place:

Tackling social factors is critical, but they are harder to affect

The most **significant factors behind a child's achievement are social, and in particular, parental**. However, it is harder for government to intervene to effect change here ; because:

- There are legitimate limits on the extent to which governments can intrude into the private family sphere. This means that our approach must focus on promoting rather than mandating positive behaviours; and
- Identifying and implementing policies to directly affect parenting and other social factors is challenging.

Educational interventions can be effective, but their potential impact is smaller

Though less of a driver of the social class attainment gap than social factors and individual characteristics, the evidence of the positive impact of **educational interventions** is more tangible. We should continue to seek to maximise the benefits that can be gained from such interventions.

There is a need both for early and sustained interventions.

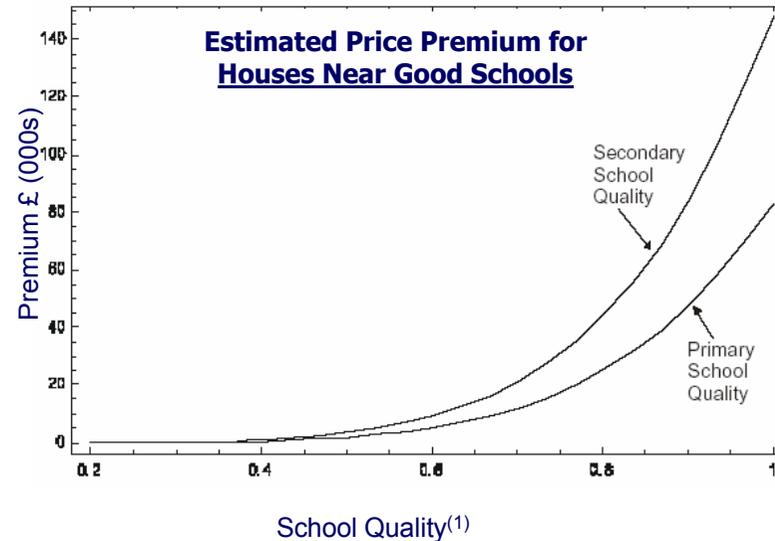
**Early intervention** is critical to address early attainment gaps that have a compounding effect through prior attainment as children get older. But unless its impact is sustained through school, it carries the risks of high expense for low gain

We may need to target resources more to narrow the gap

Universal interventions are important because they reach high numbers and because they avoid stigmatising users of services - but we need **targeting** – including of universal services themselves - to ensure that we reach the most disadvantaged and disengaged.

# Summary (III): We need to ensure that disadvantaged families are able to share in the benefits of services that are offered

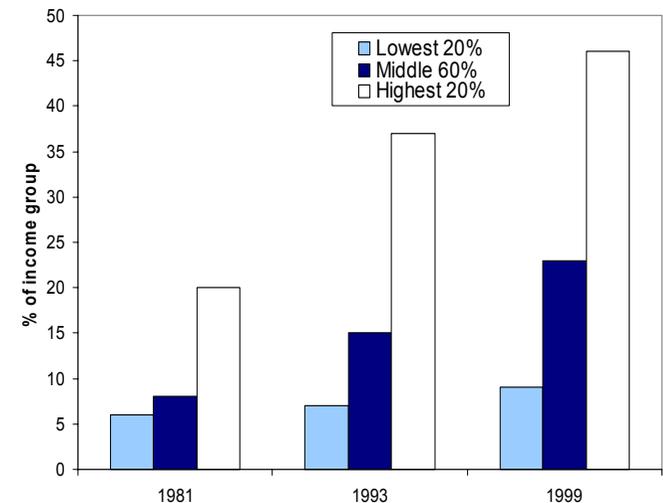
Families with higher incomes have had the means to move closer to better performing schools



Expansion of access to university education

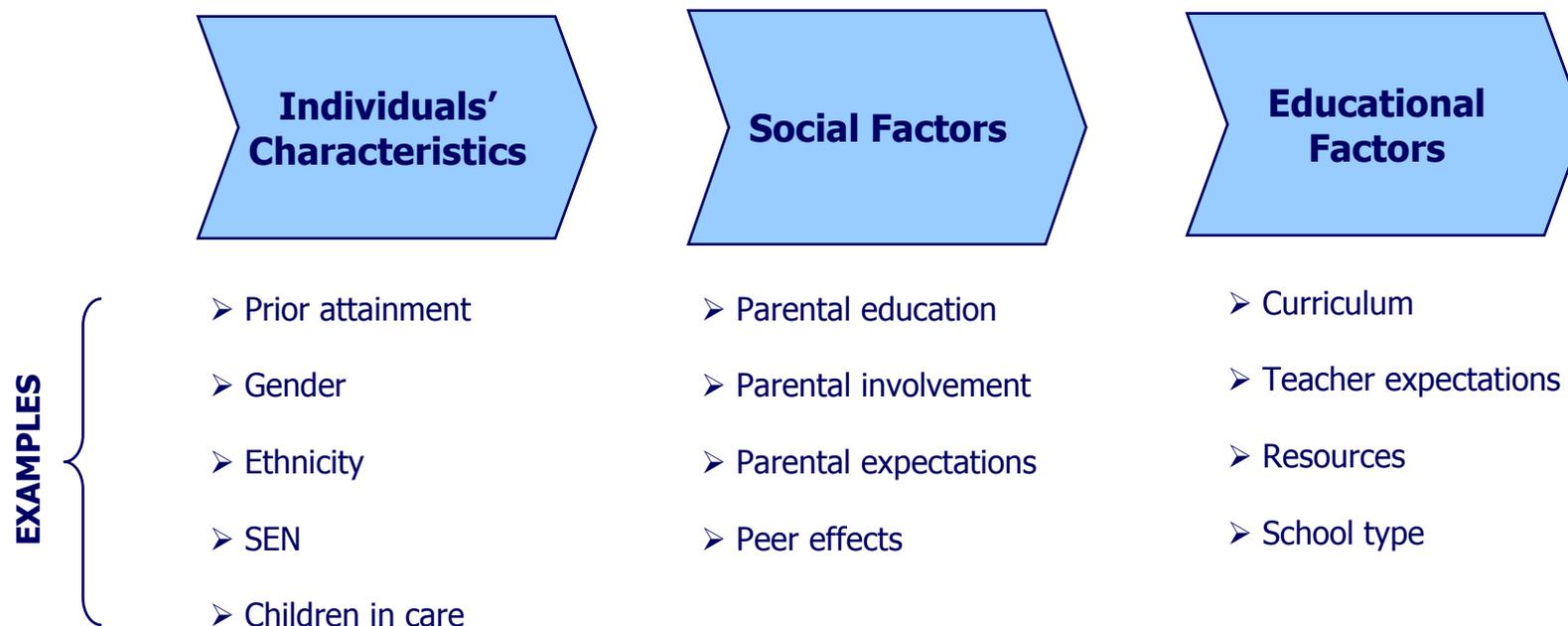
Research<sup>(2)</sup> suggests the middle classes benefited most from the expansion of Higher Education in the 80s and 90s – although between 1993 and 1999 relative growth was slightly higher for the lower SEGs

**Degree Acquisition at Age 23 (proportions) By Parental Income**



- (1) Primary school 'quality' is defined as the sum of the share of pupils passing at English Maths and Science (i.e. max value is 3). Secondary 'quality' is the share passing 5+A\*-C GCSEs (or equivalent). Each quality index is standardised to a 0-1 scale, representing the total range of outcomes in each measure. Source: House Price Premiums: Cheshire and Sheppard (2004) – for Reading area
- (2) See for example: Blanden and Machin (2004)

## Drivers of the attainment gap fall into three broad categories



These drivers are multiple and complex. Their impact can vary for individuals, and they often tend to compound each other so as to produce an overall downward effect on attainment

This section considers what we know about the relationship of these factors to the gap, and looks broadly at what we know about how effectively these factors can be addressed by policy intervention. The specific effectiveness of current Departmental policy is considered in Section D, which draws on this evidence as appropriate

# Estimates suggest that family and background factors are more significant than educational factors in mediating adult socioeconomic status

---

- Evidence from UK academics using US data on the relationships between adult economic outcomes and key influences during adolescence – schooling, family background and local area – find that **family background factors have the strongest explanatory power**, with schooling variables being the next most important and area having the smallest effect
- An extensive 'overlap' exists between schooling, family background and local area characteristics – suggesting that the disadvantage associated with family background is compounded by young people's experience of school and, in some cases, the local area
- We are investigating the possibility of conducting similar research for England, using rich datasets such as the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC)

Source: Burgess, S, Gardiner, K and Propper, C (2001) Growing up: School, family and area influences on adolescents' later life chances. Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion Paper 49. London.

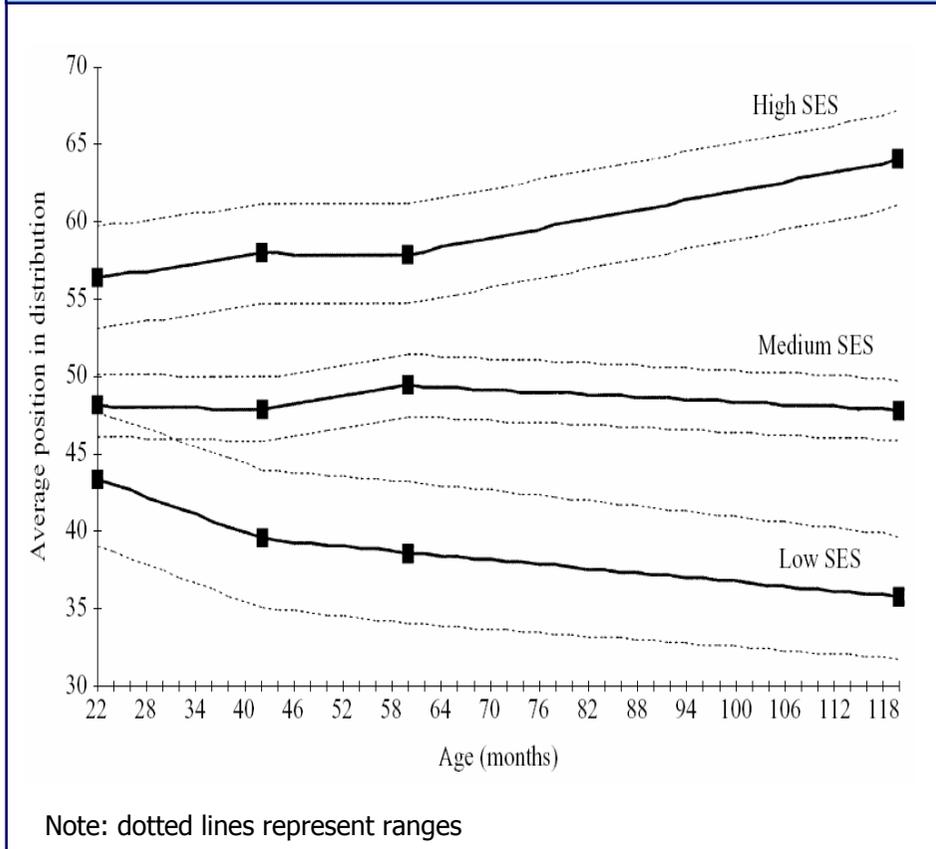
# Individuals' Characteristics

---



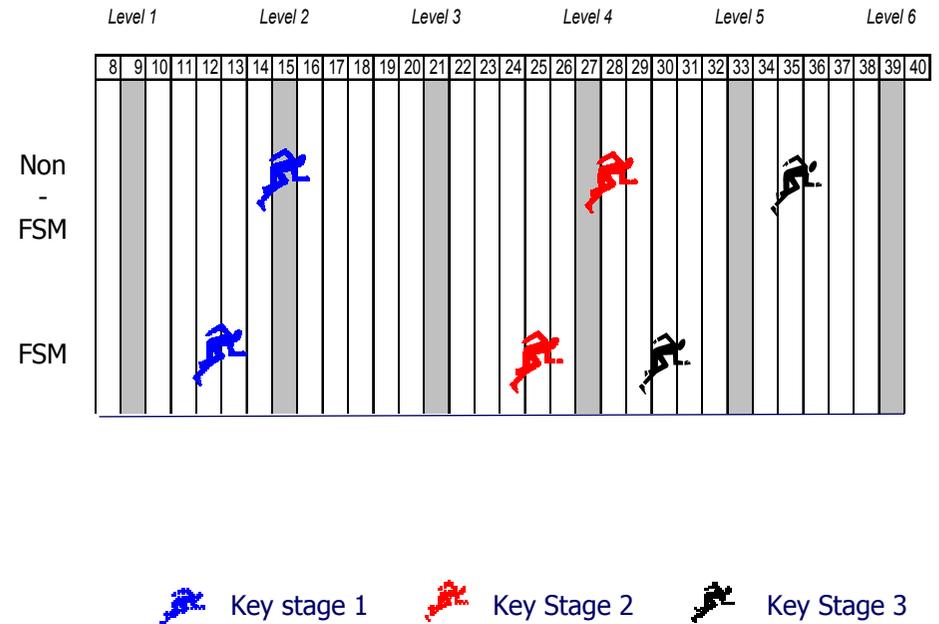
# The social class attainment gap opens at an early age and widens throughout school life

## Before school, a social class gap emerges as early as 22 months



## In school, FSM students fall further behind Non-FSM students at each key stage

### Cohort Mean Average Point Scores<sup>(2)</sup> at Key Stages 1 (1998), 2 (2002) and 3 (2005) by FSM Status<sup>(3)</sup>



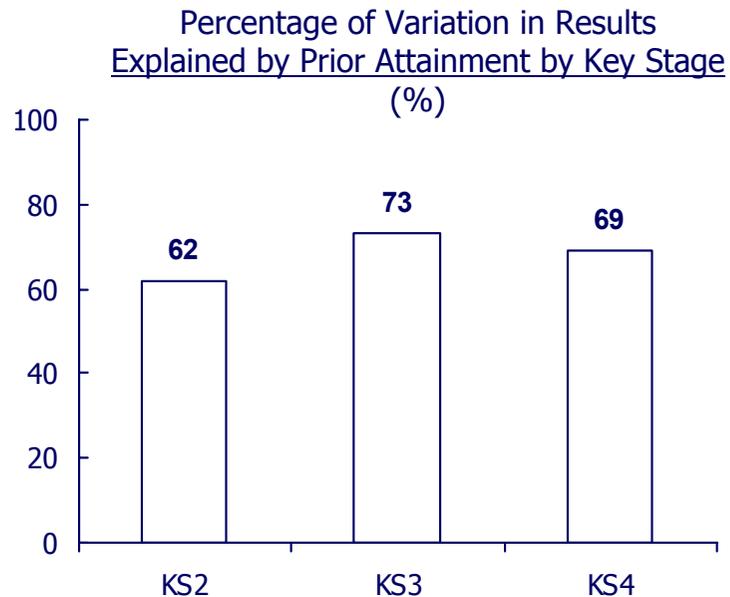
(1) Feinstein (2003). "Inequality in the Early Cognitive Development of British Children in the 1970 Cohort," *Economica*, p73-97.

(2) the Average Point Score (APS) is derived from each pupil's national curriculum test levels in English, maths and science. For KS4, APS is derived from the grades achieved in each pupil's best 8 subjects at GCSE or equivalent.

(3) Internal analysis of NPD Coverage; Maintained mainstream schools; Figures for the cohort of pupils that took their KS3 tests in 2005, KS2 in 2002 and KS1 in 1998. FSM status from derived from 2005. **Unpublished**

# At each key stage, observed differences in attainment by FSM are caused by a combination of prior attainment ...

**Prior attainment accounts for around 60-75% of variation in pupil's results**

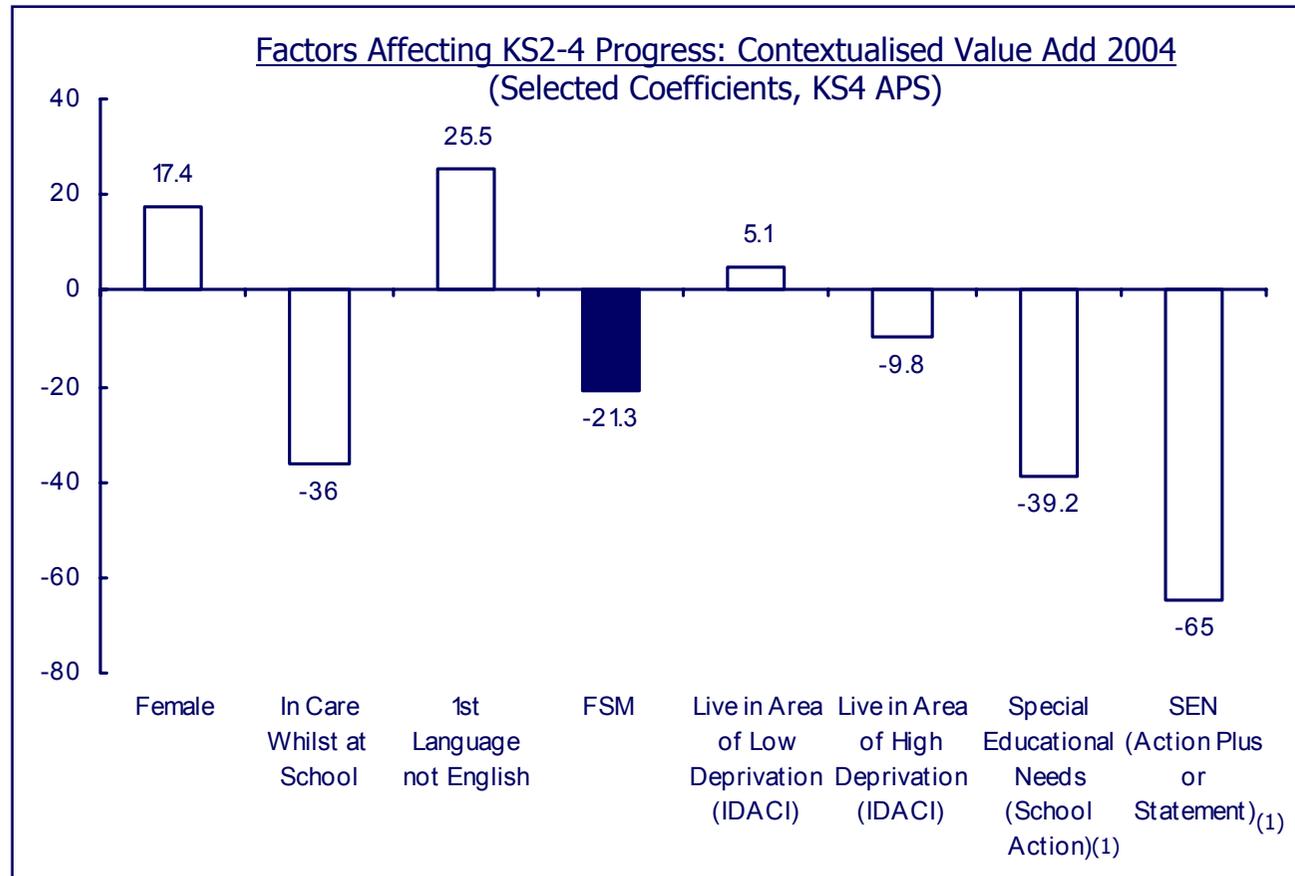


- Prior attainment has a stronger effect in KS3 and KS4 than in KS2
- This may be due to a number of reasons, for example:
  - KS2 is longer than other key stages
  - Some children may be later developers, so KS1 results do not reflect their true ability

- The strong influence of prior attainment means that many children who are low attainers early on fall into a pattern of low attainment throughout their school life.
- **But this does not mean social class is unimportant:** low attainers are disproportionately from lower social classes (see previous slide), and are therefore more likely to be caught in such a cycle of low attainment

Source: Variation in Pupil Progress 2003; data for Maintained Mainstream Schools

## ... and the additional impact of other factors on *progression* from the previous stage – notably FSM, LAC and SEN



- The model shows the impact of various factors on a pupil's progress from KS2 to KS4, controlling for prior attainment
- For example, an FSM pupil is on average predicted to score 21.3 points less at KS4 than a non-FSM pupil with the same characteristics and the same level of attainment at KS2
- A combination of various factors can serve to compound or to mitigate against each other
- **This suggests that we need continuous interventions, throughout the school system, to raise the progression of pupils receiving FSM and stop them falling further behind their peers**

Note: 6 points represent 1 grade in 1 subject, although 16 points are given for the lowest pass (grade G)

Source: DfES Contextualised Value Added modelling 2004; Maintained mainstream schools.

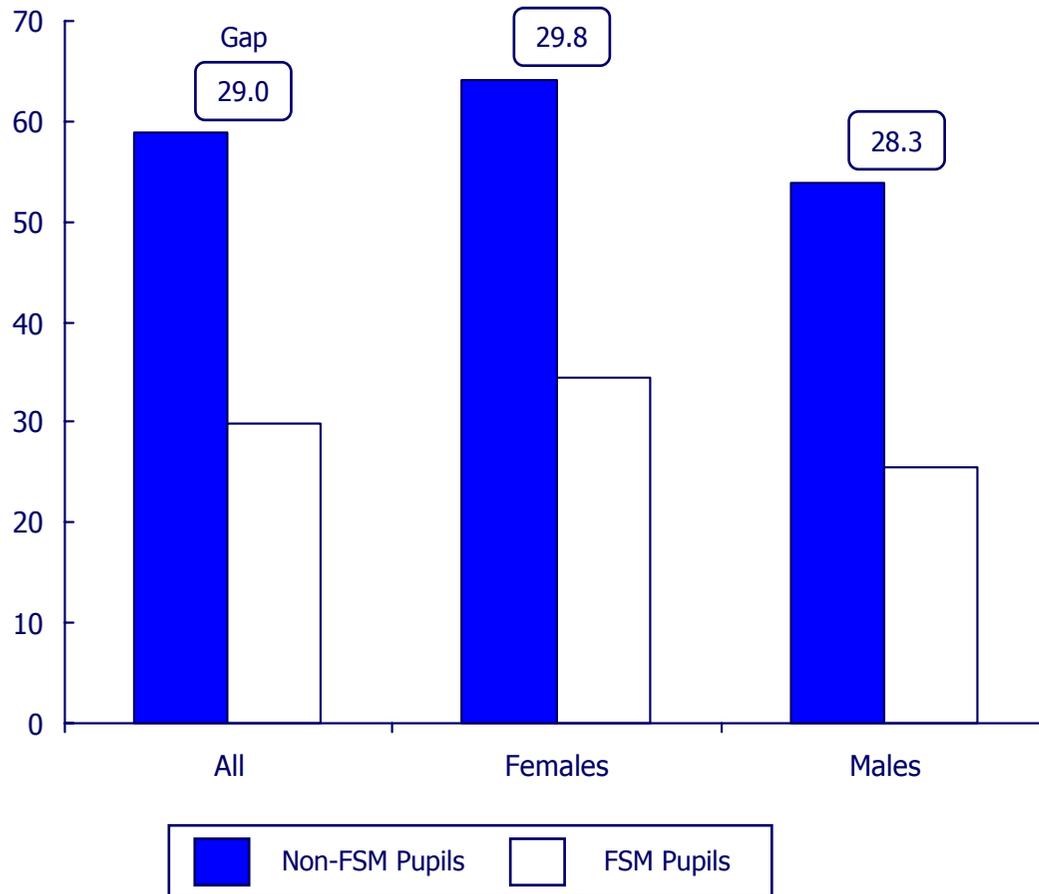
(1) **School Action**: When extra help is required to assist in a child's progress. The extra help could be provided in a number of different ways.

**School Action Plus**: When it is judged that a child requires help from an expert outside the school, for example a speech and language therapist

**Statement**: A statement of a child's special educational needs is made by an LA if they decide that all the special help a pupil needs cannot be provided from within the school's resources.

# The FSM attainment gap at KS4 is largely gender-neutral

**Percentage of Pupils Achieving Level 2<sup>(1)</sup> at Age 16: 2005**  
(%)

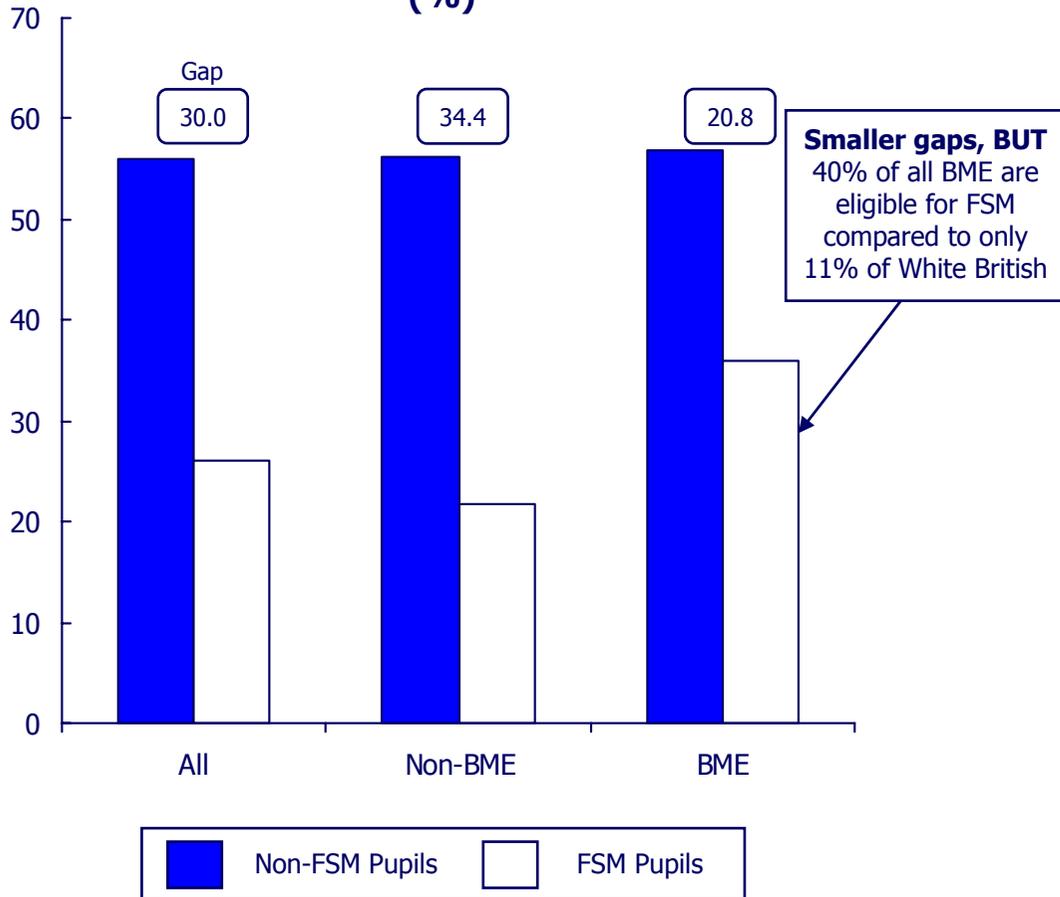


- Overall attainment gaps between boys and girls are significant (>10 percentage points)
- However, social attainment gaps (FSM: Non-FSM) are of similar levels of magnitude for both genders; both in terms of percentage point differences and in terms of odds ratios – a different method of comparing gaps which involve percentages
- This suggests that any policy initiatives to reduce social class attainment gaps should be targeting girls and boys equally

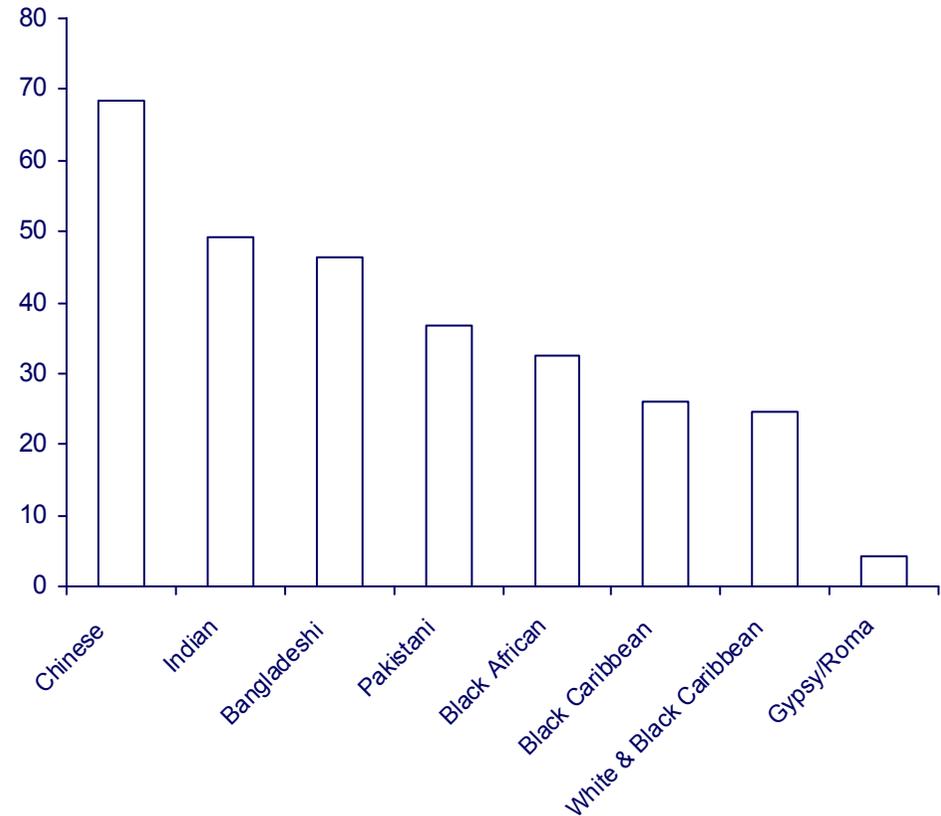
(1) Level 2 = 5+ A\*-C GCSEs or equivalents  
Source: SFR 09/2006 PLASC Data

# The FSM gap is smaller for Black and Ethnic Minority pupils, but a greater share receive FSM and outcomes differ between groups

**Percentage of Pupils Achieving Level 2<sup>(1)</sup> at Age 16: 2004 (%)**



**Percentage of FSM Pupils from Select Ethnic Groups Achieving 5+A\*-C GCSEs and Equivalent: 2004 (%)**



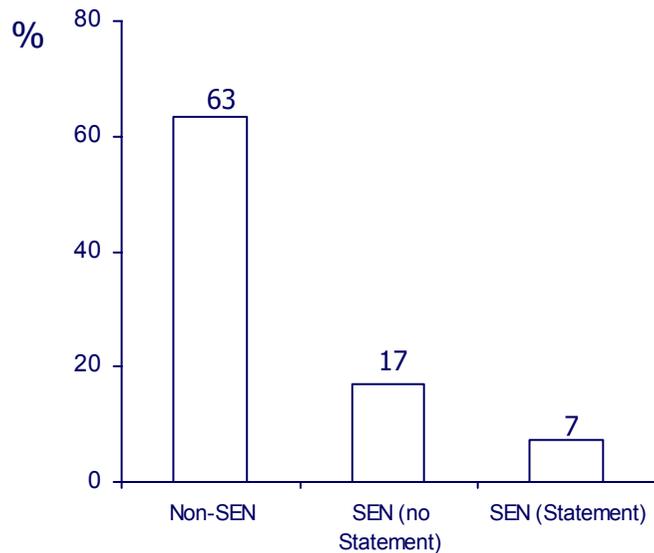
(1) Level 2 = 5+ A\*-C GCSEs or equivalents

Source: SFR 08/2005 PLASC Data; *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils*, DfES, Jan 2005

# Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) have low attainment and are disproportionately receiving FSM

**Outcomes for pupils with SEN are much worse than for pupils without SEN ...**

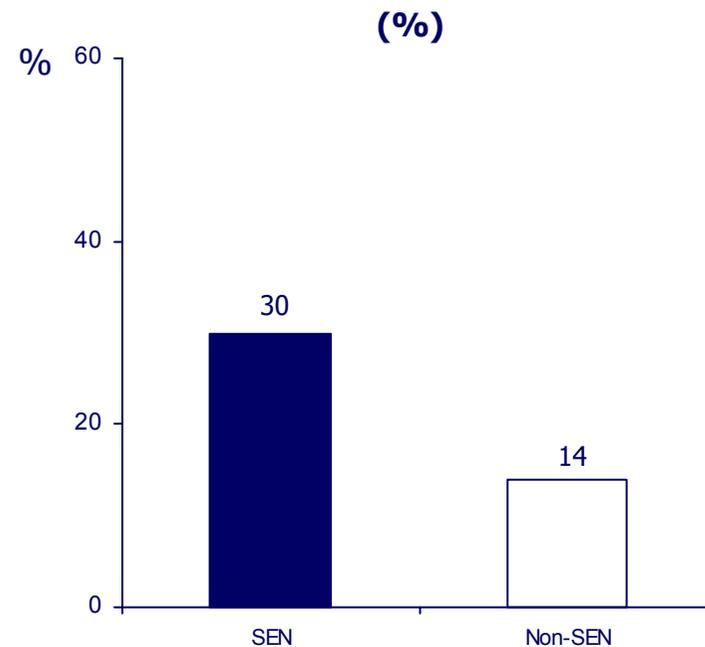
**% Achieving 5+A\*-C GCSEs 2005**



- Post-16 transitions for children with SEN compare badly with other young people e.g. 27% are NEET compared to 13% of all young people

**... Children with SEN tend to come from more deprived families**

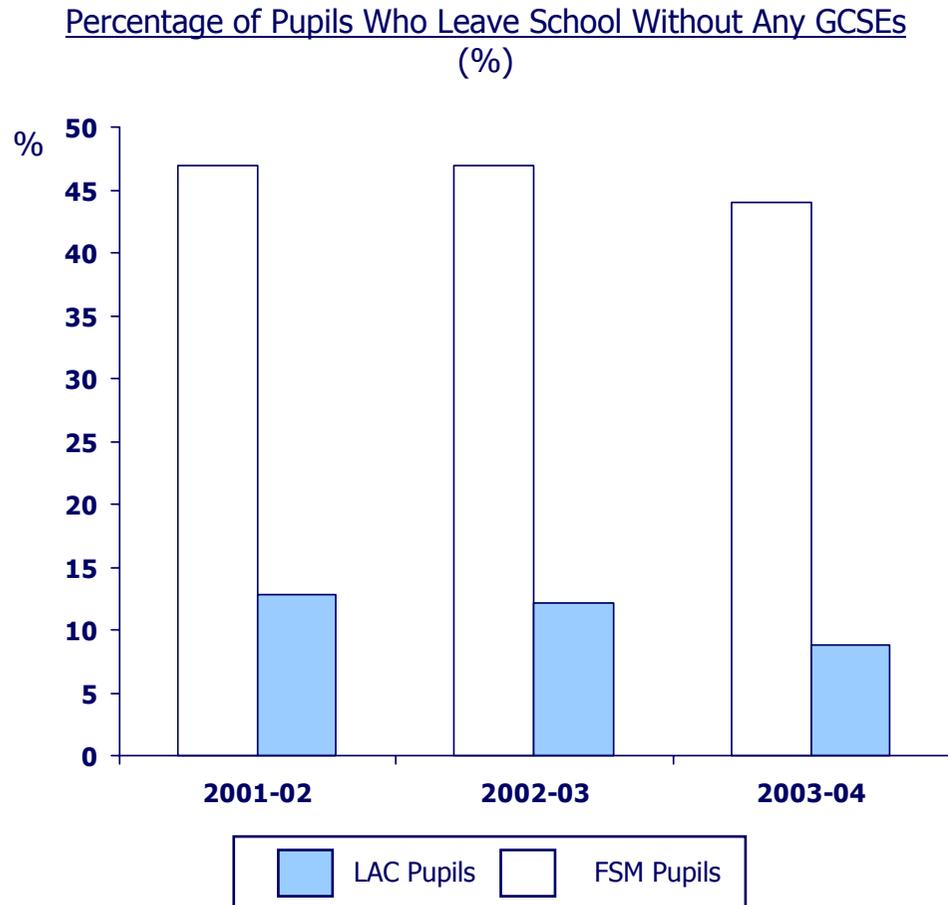
**Children on FSM by SEN Status**



Source: Attainment from SFR 08/2005, 09/2006, 24/2005 *Special Educational Needs in England*, Jan 05, DfES

# Similarly, Looked After Children (LAC) have particularly low attainment and are more likely to have poorer backgrounds

**Looked after children are much more likely to leave school without GCSEs than pupils on FSM**



- Looked after children are much more likely to suffer mental health disorders – 49% of 11-15 yr olds compared to 11% of other children
- No direct evidence to show that children in care come from low income families but many of the indicators of need (abuse, absent parenting etc) more prevalent in low income households
- Children in care are not generally eligible for FSM, as eligibility is dependent on parental or carer benefit receipt. Only around 16% of looked after children are FSM-eligible
- Intergenerational effects – 1/3 mothers who suffered abuse, abuse their own children, making them 12 times more likely than average to be abusive parents

Source: Attainment data from Outcomes for CLA (DfES publication); SFR 08/2005; SSDA 903 2004

# Evidence on these individual characteristics suggests that our interventions need to start early, be targeted and be continuous

Social class attainment gaps open early and persist. They are caused by a combination of (a) prior attainment; (b) impact of social class on progression from the previous stage; and (c) the impact of other factors such as SEN, ethnicity and being in care. **This suggests that we require:**

## 1. Early Interventions

To prevent an emergence of the gap before school. Academic research also suggests that early investments may be more productive than later investments.<sup>(1)</sup>

## 2. Continued Interventions

To ensure that FSM pupils progress as well as Non-FSM pupils. Evidence from many early childhood programmes suggests that attainment gains tend to fade to some extent after the intervention is stopped – requires later investments to complement early interventions.

## 3. Targeted Interventions

Universal interventions are often accessed first by higher socioeconomic groups which suggests some targeting is required to narrow the gap.

### But there are risks...

It is unlikely the same interventions work equally well for everyone, especially where groups have particularly complex needs or are in very different circumstances, e.g. Looked After Children. Understanding those characteristics and the impact on solutions is essential - a segmented approach is likely to be more effective.

Over reliance on targeted intervention ignores some problems:

- It can be difficult to identify low attainers in the early years before we formally measure attainment - there are false positives and negatives among risk factors for poor attainment
- Waiting until the child or young person has disengaged before intervening can make intervention more difficult and costly.
- Targeting without stigmatising – how to target at-risk groups in the early years without encouraging negative outcomes

(1) Heckman and Caniero (2003) *Human Capital Policy*

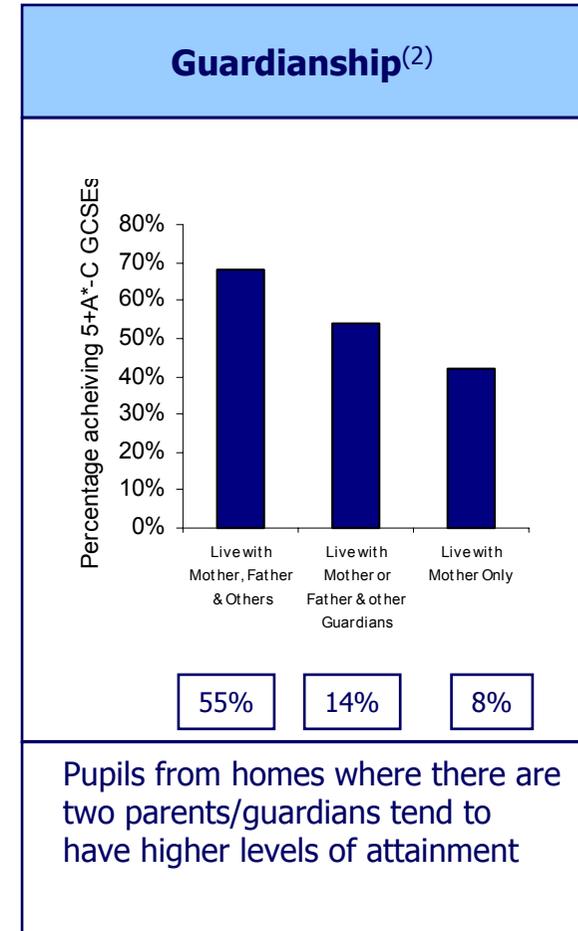
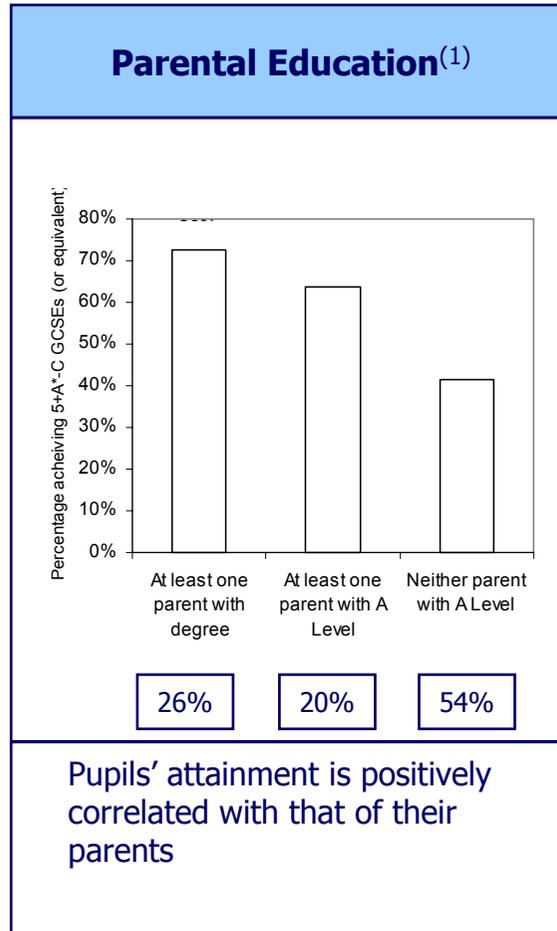
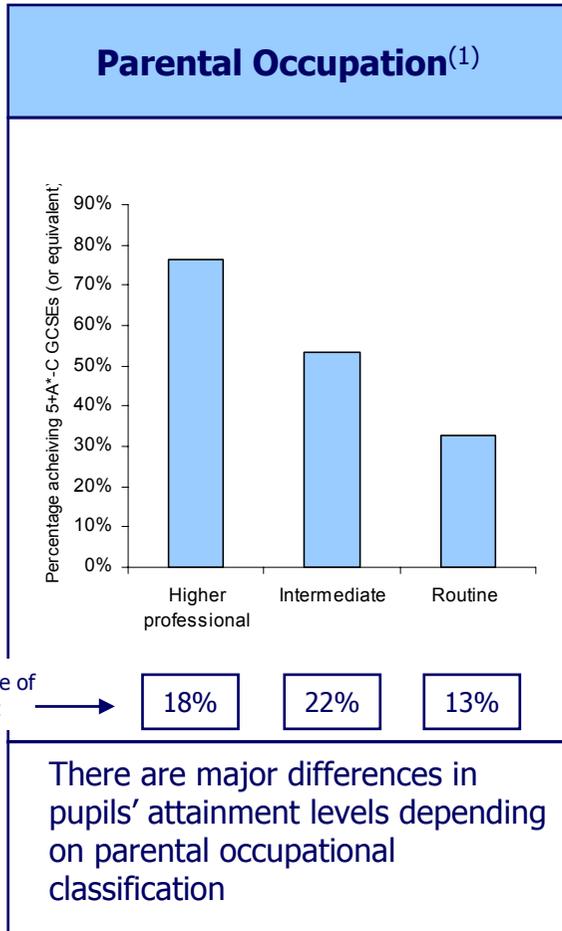
# Social Factors

---



# The attainment gap is associated with differences across a number of social dimensions (although not necessarily causal)

## Attainment Gaps at 16 by Various Parental Characteristics



(1) Youth Cohort Study, Cohort 12, Sweep 1. *SFR 04/2005 (Coverage: England & Wales, maintained and independent mainstream schools)*

(2) *What are the Links Between Social Class and Results according to PISA?*, SARD Rapid Analysis Note 32/05 Analysis is based on **un-weighted data. Unpublished**

# While family background factors are critical to a child's attainment, their effect is mediated through a number of key processes

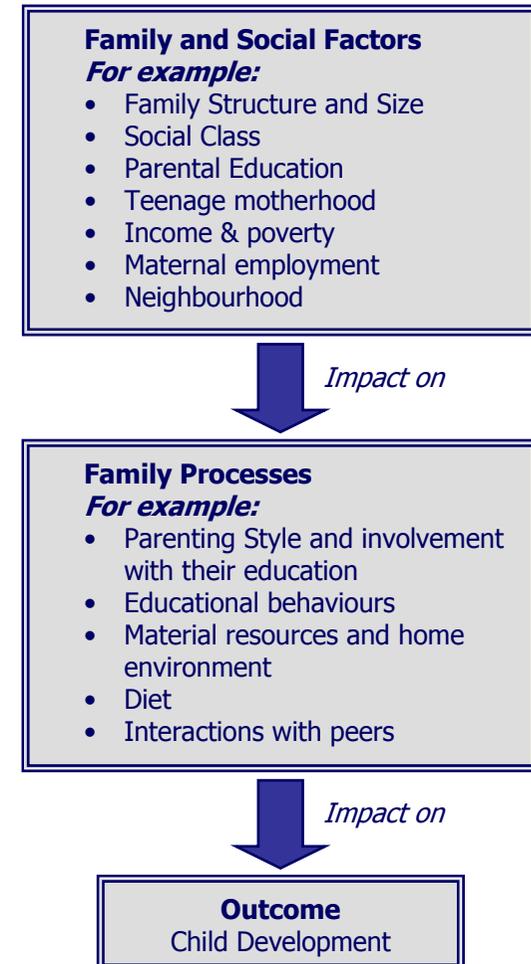
The social class gap is often viewed in terms of statistical associations between parent characteristics and child outcomes. But such factors do not necessarily describe a direct causal influence on child outcomes. Research suggests the impact of social class on child outcomes is mediated by key family processes experienced directly by the child, including parental involvement and practice

There are a number of theories to explain why such processes vary by social class, e.g.:

- *Working class parents may place different values on education, or have different expectations of it.* While parents want the best for their children, working class parents may not automatically *expect* certain outcomes in the same way as middle class parents.<sup>(1)</sup> Parents' expectations set the context within which young people develop, shape their own expectations and provide a framework within which decisions are taken.
- *Differences in "social capital":* Working class parents may have less personal knowledge, and fewer skills and contacts to help their children effectively; children may not have role models within their immediate families who have succeeded in education.

A recent study suggested that "if the parenting involvement practices of most working class parents could be raised to the levels of the best working class parents in these terms, very significant advances in school achievement might reasonably be expected"<sup>(2)</sup>

## Example of Family Impact



Source: Adapted from Feinstein et al (2004) *A Model of the Inter-generational Transmission of Educational Success* WBL Research Report No.10.

(1) *British Social Attitudes Survey 2004*. National Centre for Social Research.

(2) Desforges and Abouchar (2003): *The impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment; A literature review* DfES Research Report 433

# Parental expectations and involvement are important factors in their own right – and can have an influence independent of social class

## Parental expectations

- Differences in social mobility between ethnic groups (especially Chinese and Indian) shows that some minority ethnic groups are more likely to be upwardly mobile than their white counterparts - in part due to parental aspirations, support and the value placed on education.
- A US study showed that the effect of parents' expectations and plans for college are strong in predicting pupils' college participation – controlling for them led to a fall in the impact of pupils' own future expectations on their college participation

## Parental involvement

- Overall picture is that what parents do with their children is more important than parents' circumstances e.g. occupation and employment
- The home learning environment is just as effective in disadvantaged households as in more affluent environments – but good practice is less likely amongst poorer families
- For reading and maths, parental interest in a child's schooling was more powerful than other family indicators including social class and accounted for at least 10% of variation in achievement.
- Literature review found that parental involvement, in particular, 'at home good parenting' has a significant impact on achievement and this was evident across all social classes and ethnic groups.



**Suggests that if we could affect involvement and expectation, this would have an impact irrespective of the social class status of parents**

Sources: Platt (2005) *Migration and Social Mobility*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Ma, X. (2001) 'Participation in advanced mathematics: Do expectation and influence of students, peers, teachers, and parents matter?' *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 26, 132-146. EPPE (2002); Feinstein and Symons (1999). "Attainment in secondary school," *Oxford Economic Papers*, 51, p300-321; Desforges and Abouchar (2003) *The Impact of Parental Involvement, parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment: A Literature Review* DfES Research Report No. 433

## Opportunities for Government to influence social factors

---

- One parent-child literacy programme showed value-added gains through to age 5 compared with a control group and large effect sizes (up to 0.65) on a range of cognitive development indicators
- Those programmes which have an impact are often highly targeted, specialised and costly
- Young people who live in single-parent/carer households or workless households often have lower attainment levels
- Increasing employment rates should raise family income, and permanent income does appear to matter for child development. However research suggests that short term (unanticipated) variations in income have a negligible effect on a child's attainment
- The Department can try to influence employment rates through providing access to childcare - to enable parents to return to work - and through improving adult skill levels

Sources and further reading: Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) The Impact of Parental Involvement, parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment: A Literature Review DfES Research Report No. 433; Ermisch et al 2004, 'Parental Partnership and Joblessness in Childhood and Their Influence on Young People's Outcomes' Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A, 167(1), 69-101. Feinstein et al (2004) A Model of the Inter-generational Transmission of Educational Success WBL Research Report No.10. Moran et al (2004) What Works in Parenting Support? DfES Report RR574

## Peer effects have a significant, but small, impact on attainment

---

- Peer effects do appear to have a significant, albeit modest, effect on pupil attainment
  - Latest research suggests that peer groups could account for around 0.6% of the variance in pupils' progress between the ages of 11 and 14 – this is a relatively small impact. General differences in schools explain about 13% of the variance
  - And peer effects are dwarfed by the impact of pupils' own prior attainment
- There is also evidence that the influence of peer effects depends on a pupil's level of ability:
  - Low ability pupils do not appear to benefit as much from mixing with high ability peers as intermediate and high ability pupils do
- Peer groups with relatively more pupils receiving FSM do not have a direct impact on a pupils' attainment once the prior attainment of the group is taken into account. Other peer-group demographic effects also have insignificant or relatively small effects
- However, measurement of educational peer effects is very complex as it is difficult to isolate the influence of peers from the influence of other unobserved factors. In addition, peer group effects are likely to operate on other important outcomes besides attainment, for example safety, security and social networks

# Educational Factors

---



# A number of educational factors have the potential to narrow the attainment gap

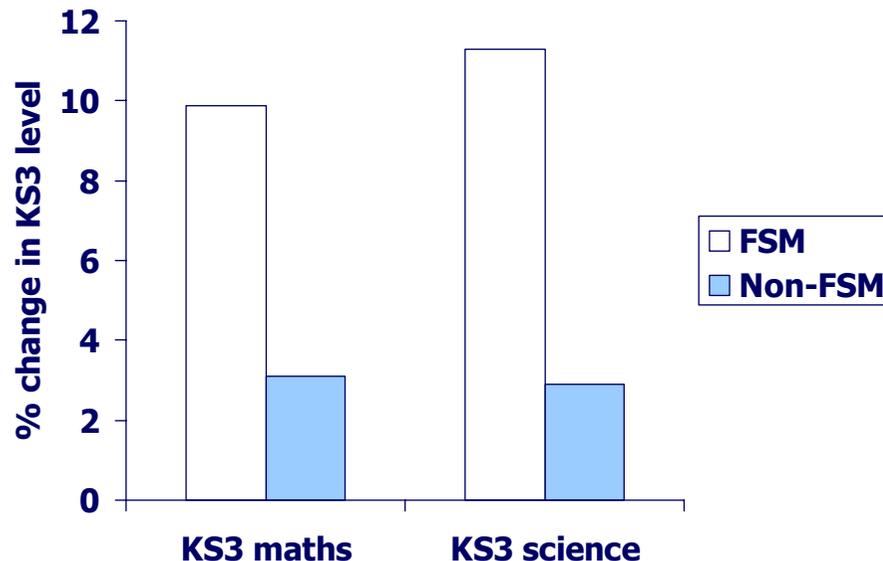
Potential Factor	Description
School income and/or resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the impact of spending additional resources on more deprived pupils? Do pupil:teacher ratios make any difference?</li></ul>
School type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To what extent does school type make a difference to the attainment gap?</li></ul>
Curriculum and qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What curriculum levers are available to improve the performance of low attainers? What types of qualifications have greatest benefit for low SEG groups?</li></ul>
Ability grouping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does grouping children by ability within schools have any positive impact on the attainment gap?</li></ul>
Focus on the basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will a focus on numeracy and literacy provide a long term reduction in the attainment gap?</li></ul>

All of these educational interventions have the potential to improve the attainment of more deprived pupils – but only if implemented in the right way

# Increases in resources can have positive (though relatively small) effects on attainment at KS3, particularly for FSM pupils

Impact of extra £100 per pupil, per annum for 3 yrs, on pupil attainment at KS3 by FSM status: 2003

(% change in KS3 level)



- **Impact:** £100 extra spending per pupil, per year for 3 years, increases attainment of pupils receiving FSM, on average, at KS3 Maths by 9% of a level; and at KS3 Science by 11% of a level
- Research estimated three types of resource effects - reducing pupil-teacher ratios tended to have most impact on attainment but still small
- Particular benefits to pupils receiving FSM at KS3 – especially those of high ability. But resource effects were not found across the board – the impact on English is not statistically significant
- New research suggests smaller effects of extra resources on GCSE attainment. And no differential impact on FSM pupils – although impact is greater on the GCSE attainment of lower ability students who are more likely to be low SEG
- However this analysis takes no account of what resources are spent on. Slides 62 and 63 suggest there are ways of ensuring additional investment has a strong impact on attainment.

Sources: Vignoles, Levacic et al, (2005) 'Effect of Resources on Pupil Attainment at KS3', DfES; Levacic et al, (2006), 'Estimating the relationship between school resources and pupil attainment at GCSE', DfES

# In assessing a school's performance on narrowing the attainment gap, it is necessary to consider both absolute and value-added measures

**In schools we would like to see high average attainment and a narrow FSM attainment gap**

- Schools which have high levels of average attainment **and** a narrow gap between the attainment levels of FSM and Non-FSM pupils could be considered to be doing well
- This is consistent with our twin goals of reducing in the gap while simultaneously increasing overall attainment (see: slide 9).
- These two dimensions can be measured using absolute attainment results for any given year.

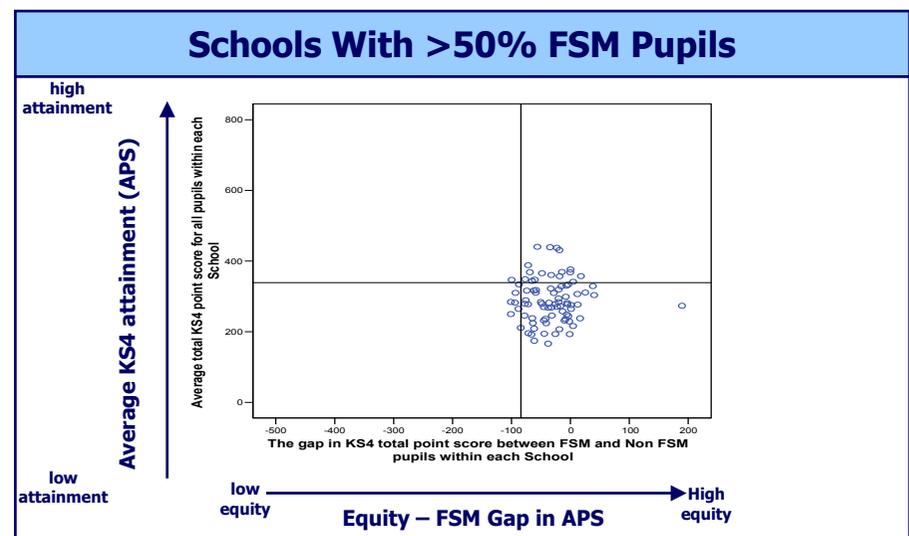
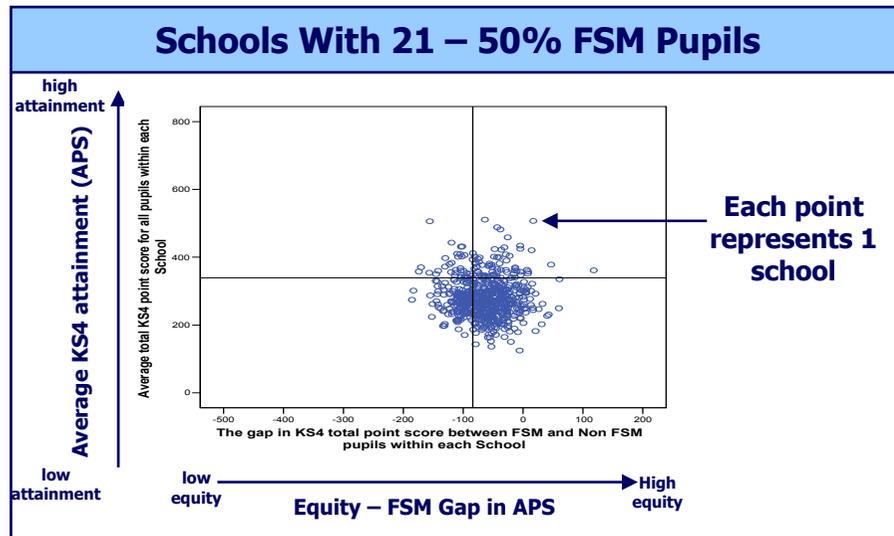
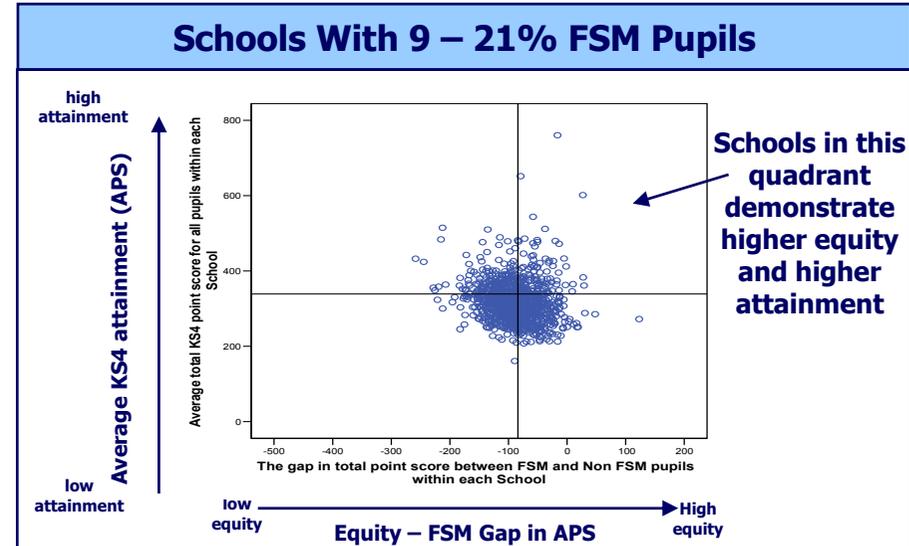
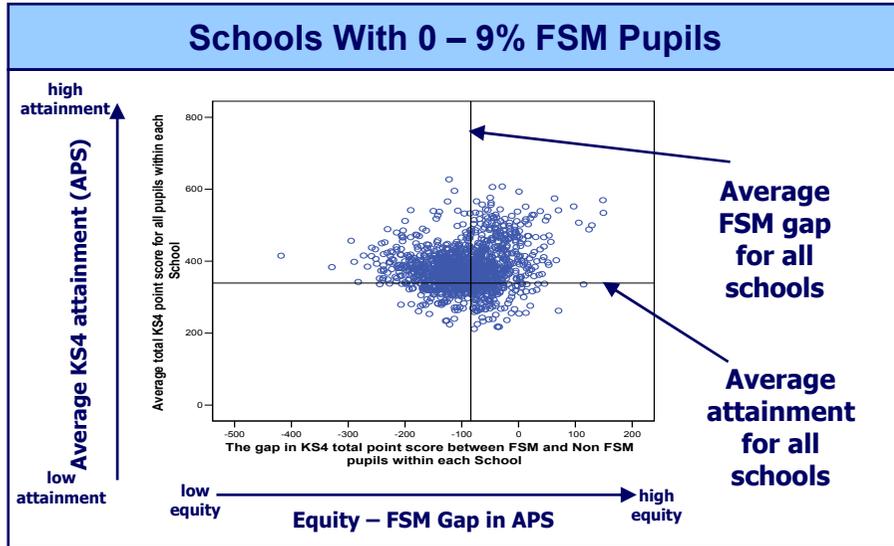
**But observed school performance is also influenced by the characteristics of the pupil intake**

- A school's performance is influenced by the characteristics of its pupil intake, and its ability to add-value given these characteristics. Looking only at absolute attainment ignores such differences between schools.
- It is possible for changes in intake at once to widen the in-school attainment gap and narrow the national attainment gap if the change in intake is associated with improved performance among FSM pupils.
- DfES's Contextualised Value-Added (CVA) model measures relative performance taking into account differences in schools' pupil intakes. CVA controls for differences in pupil characteristics, and measures progress of pupils within the school, relative to the national average.
- New analysis considers how CVA scores vary for FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils. Therefore, where a school has a higher CVA score for FSMs relative to non-FSMs, it suggests that the absolute gap is *narrower than we would expect* given prior attainment and background characteristics (although it says nothing about the absolute gap or the average level of attainment).

**We therefore need to consider both absolute and relative measures of performance**

- As a result, the most holistic way of understanding what is happening to social mobility in schools is to use a mix of absolute attainment levels and CVA.
- The three dimensions most relevant to performance in relation to social mobility are therefore:
  - average attainment (***see: slide 58***);
  - the attainment gap between Non-FSM and FSM pupils (***see: slide 58***); and
  - the CVA for FSM pupils (***see: slides 59-62***).

# We want a high attainment/high equity system. Social class gaps are currently narrower in more deprived schools, but overall attainment is lower



Source: Internal Analysis: Data relates to 2004. Maintained mainstream schools

# CVA modelling can identify which types of schools are more or less effective for deprived pupils



## Overview of CVA Analysis

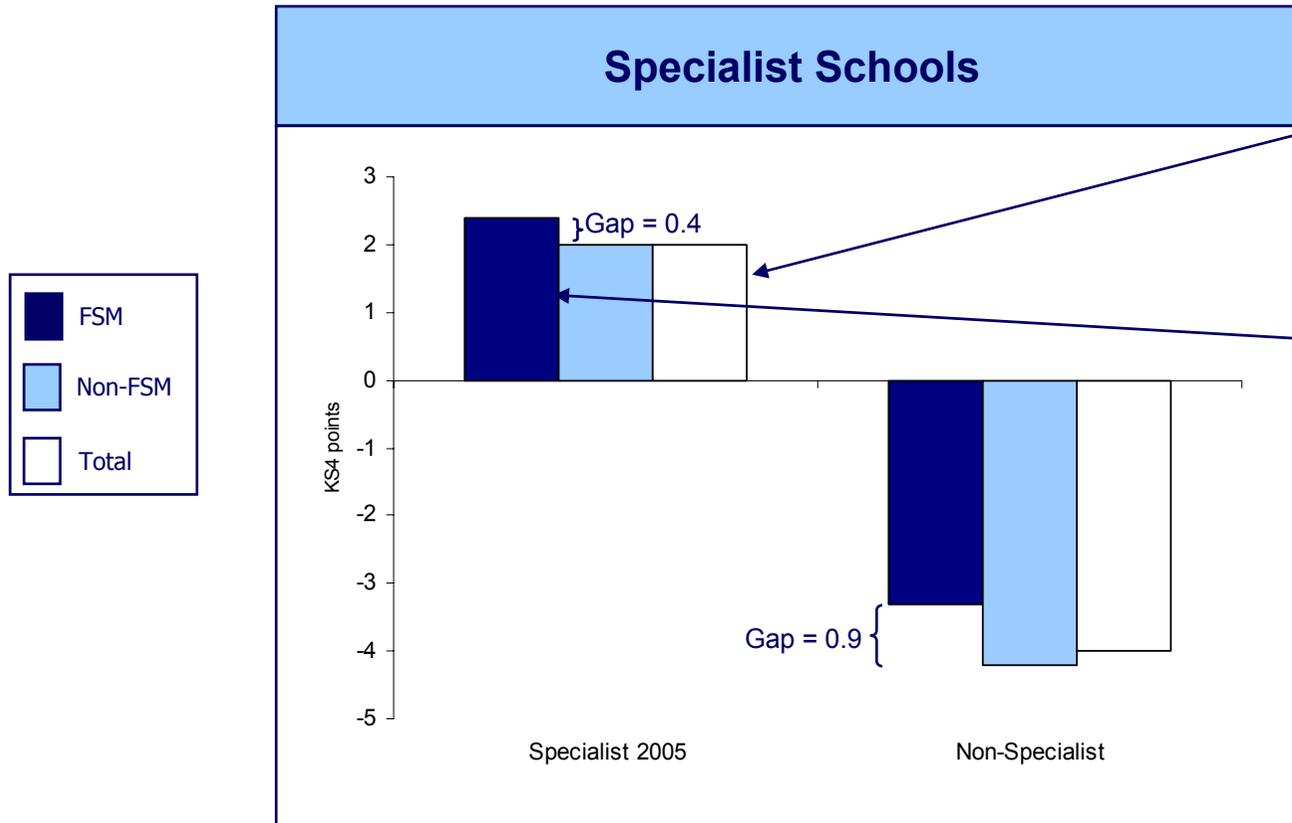
- Contextualised value added (CVA) measures a pupil's progress after taking account of prior attainment and a range of other factors that are outside the school's control.
- CVA measures are used in this analysis as opposed to Value Added measures because they are better for understanding historical pupil data. The CVA measure takes into account characteristics of pupil-intake which affect attainment but which schools cannot control.
- The CVA analysis estimates the value that schools add to a pupil's outcomes beyond what we predict for them, given their personal circumstances.
- If CVA is relatively high in one type of school, it provides evidence that that type of school may be relatively effective given the characteristics of the pupils in the school's intake.
- We can also go further to consider specifically the CVA for *deprived* pupils: are some school types differentially effective for deprived pupils?
- The CVA analysis is for Key Stages 2-4. In the modern points system, a G is worth 16 points and each grade above worth 6 points more, i.e. a C is worth 40 points. A pupil with 8 grade Cs will therefore achieve  $8 \times 40 = 320$  points.

## Caveats on Analysis

- The CVA analysis takes account of the large national gap in progress between FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils. Where results show FSM pupils in certain school types performing above average, or better than non-FSM pupils, this is only relative to this national pattern – **it does not mean that deprived pupils are doing better in absolute terms**
- **This analysis is indicative only and therefore cannot attribute causation.** Also results are not independent from the effect of other policy variables. For example faith and VA results largely driven by same schools.
- Differences are often small. Given these are national estimates, there is likely to be considerable variation around these results.
- An overall difference between Specialists and non-Specialists of 6 points may only be only equivalent to about one grade in one subject, but it applies to 364,000 pupils in Specialist schools (obviously this is an average – some pupils had more, some less). Some of these pupils will be borderline 5+ A\*-C.

# Pupils receiving FSM make better-than-predicted progress in specialist schools ...

## Results from Contextualised Value-Added Analysis: 2005



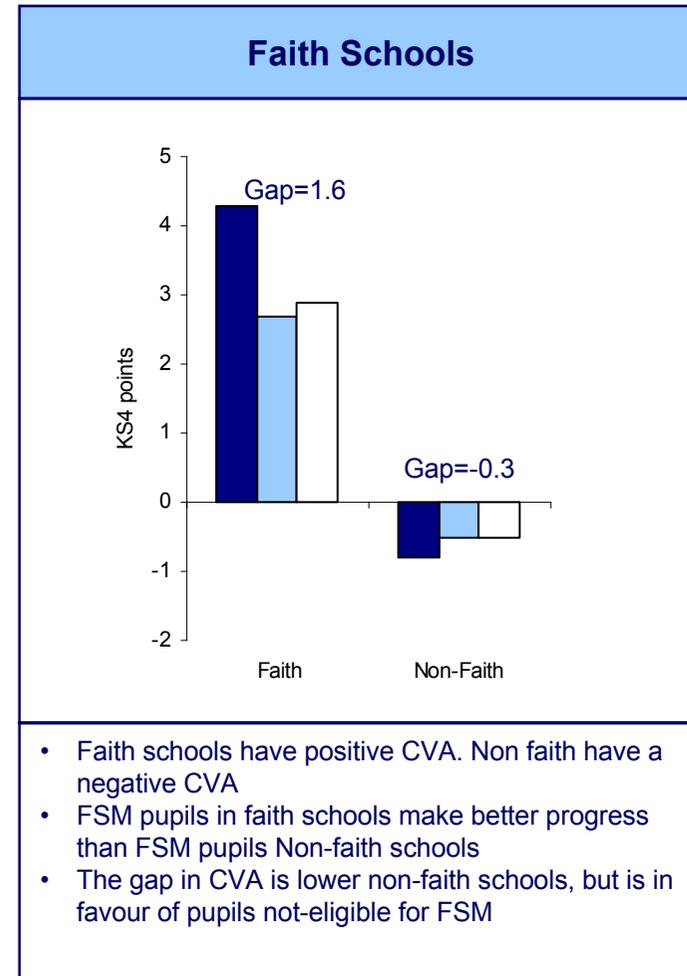
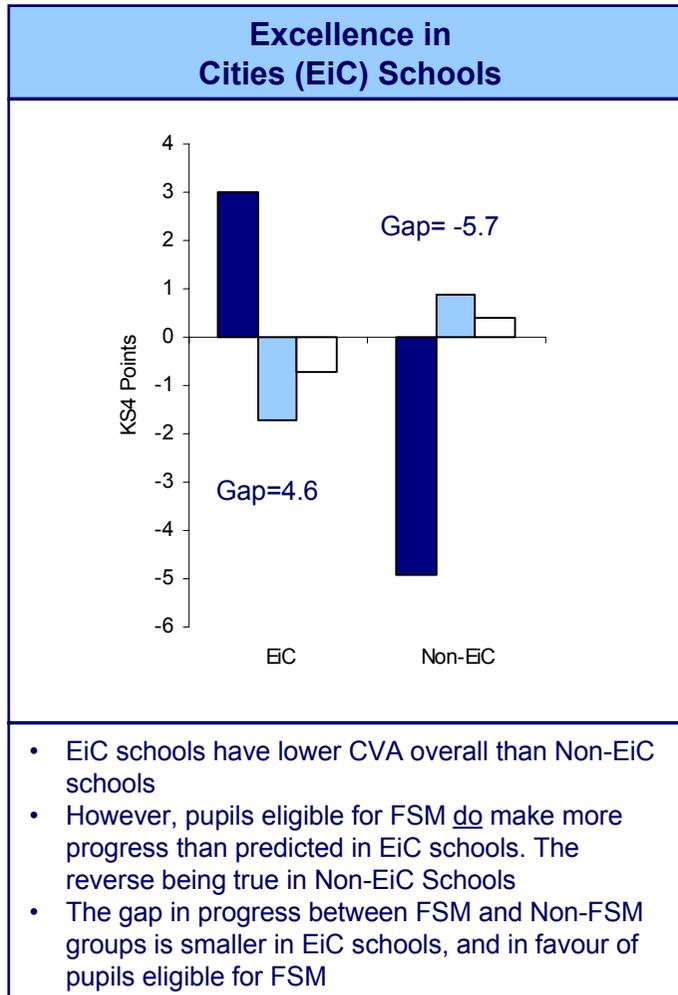
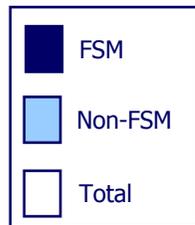
Overall pupils in specialist schools make better than predicted progress than pupils in non-specialist schools. This is a difference of 6 points – about 1 grade in 1 subject at GCSE

...and pupils receiving FSM in specialist schools make more progress than those in non-specialist schools, and more progress than non-FSM pupils in specialist schools...

Source: Internal Analysis PLASC 2005. Maintained Mainstream Schools only

# ... and in EIC schools and faith schools ...

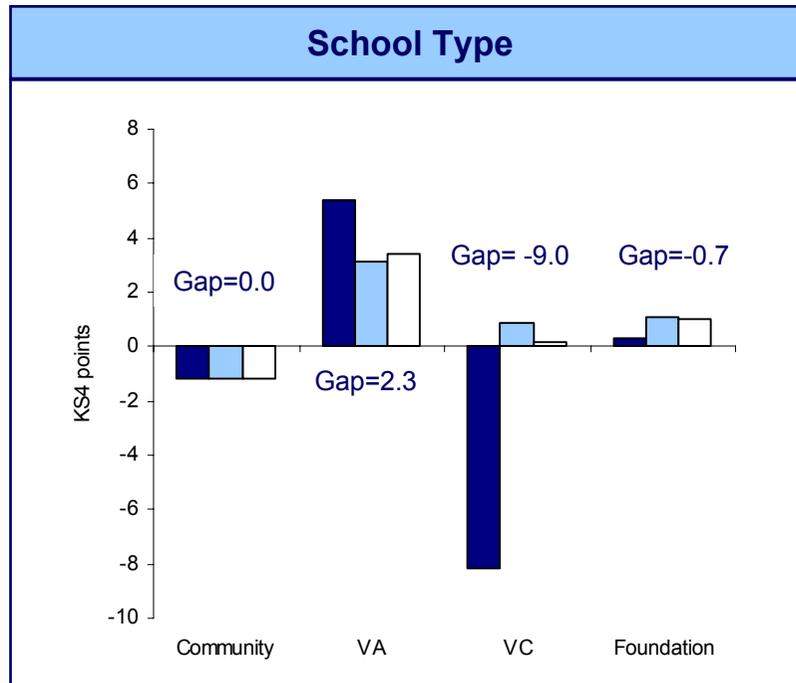
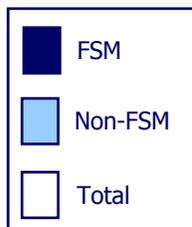
## Results from Contextualised Value-Added Analysis: 2005



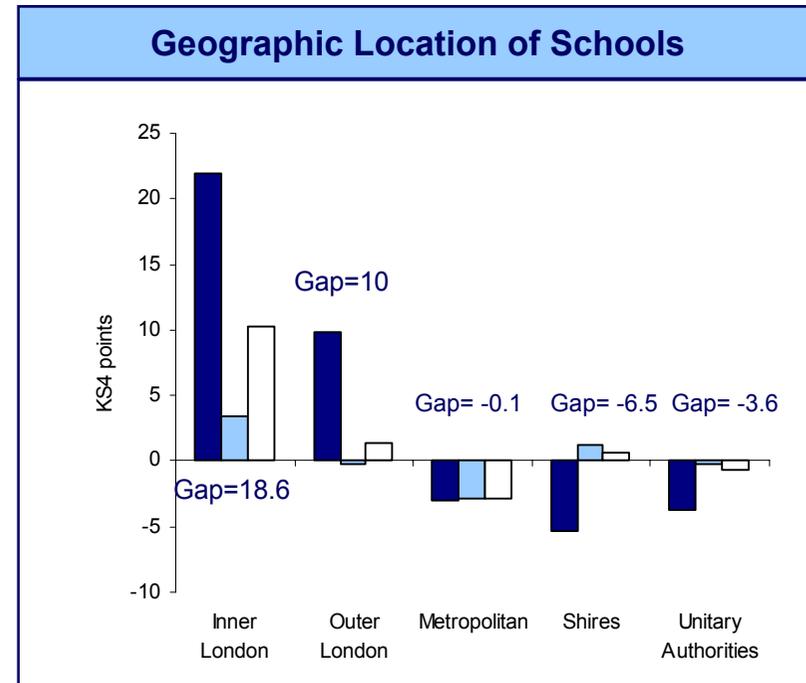
Source: Internal Analysis PLASC 2005. Maintained Mainstream Schools only

# ... Pupils receiving FSM also perform better than predicted in voluntary aided and foundation schools and in London schools

## Results from Contextualised Value-Added Analysis: 2005



- Voluntary Aided schools have the highest CVA scores, with FSMs making more progress than non-FSMs.
- There is little difference in CVA by FSM in community and foundation schools, although CVA is positive in foundation but negative in community schools.
- Voluntary Controlled schools have above average CVA overall, but pupils eligible for FSM make significantly less progress than predicted by the CVA model.



- London schools (particularly inner London) have higher CVA scores than the national average. There is a large CVA FSM gap, driven by the strong progress of pupils eligible for FSMs.
- Metropolitan districts have lower overall CVA, but little discernable difference by FSM.
- FSM pupils have negative CVA scores in Shires and Unitary Authorities, with a larger gap in the Shires

Source: Internal Analysis PLASC 2005. Maintained Mainstream Schools only

# Deprived pupils particularly benefit from a focus on the basics, providing a platform for personalisation

---

- **Quality first teaching:**

- The Rose Review highlighted the importance of quality mainstream teaching of systematic phonics to prevent reading difficulties and interventions
- A small sample, longitudinal UK study found that with analytic phonics tuition, advantaged pupils read and spelt significantly better than disadvantaged children. However with synthetic phonics there was no difference in word reading ability or spelling ability according to social background. The recently published *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading* concluded that the case for systematic phonic work is overwhelming and is much strengthened by a synthetic approach.

- **Appropriate and personalised interventions can benefit those with literacy difficulties**

- Reading recovery:
  - 40% of those on reading recovery are on FSM
  - 83% of those on FSM were lifted to average levels of literacy within 20 weeks, from a history of no or little progress, remaining 17% had benefited to some extent
  - 69% of pupils receiving these interventions went on to achieve L2 at KS1 in reading and 61% in writing – so benefits appear to be sustained
- Study support:
  - Learners participating in study support (voluntary learning activities out of school hours) achieved more than predicted by on average 3 and a half grades – with those eligible for FSM benefiting slightly more and minority ethnic groups significantly more
- But any gains made in interventions must be sustained and built upon with mainstream teaching, so that gains are not lost

Sources: Reading Recovery National Network, (2004), UK National Monitoring Report, 2003-04, Institute of Education, London; Hurry and Sylva, 1998; Macbeath et al 2001); Johnston, R.S, and Watson, J. (2005). A Seven Year Study of the Effects of Synthetic Phonics Teaching on Reading and Spelling Attainment. Insight 17. Scottish Executive Education Department: Edinburgh

# Classroom organisation affects attainment of deprived groups – but its success depends on how it is implemented

## Ability Grouping

- Ability grouping – for example by setting or streaming - can be used to help tailor learning. Many schools use such grouping, although analysis does not find a significant difference in average attainment between setting and mixed ability teaching. There is some evidence that setting can widen the attainment distribution. This may be the result of poor teaching in lower attainment groups and pupil motivation
- Challenge is to ensure that setting, as part of personalised learning, is implemented in the right way to tailor learning effectively, and not in a way that will widen the attainment distribution
- Departmental analysis currently underway is exploring methods of ensuring that setting can benefit more disadvantaged

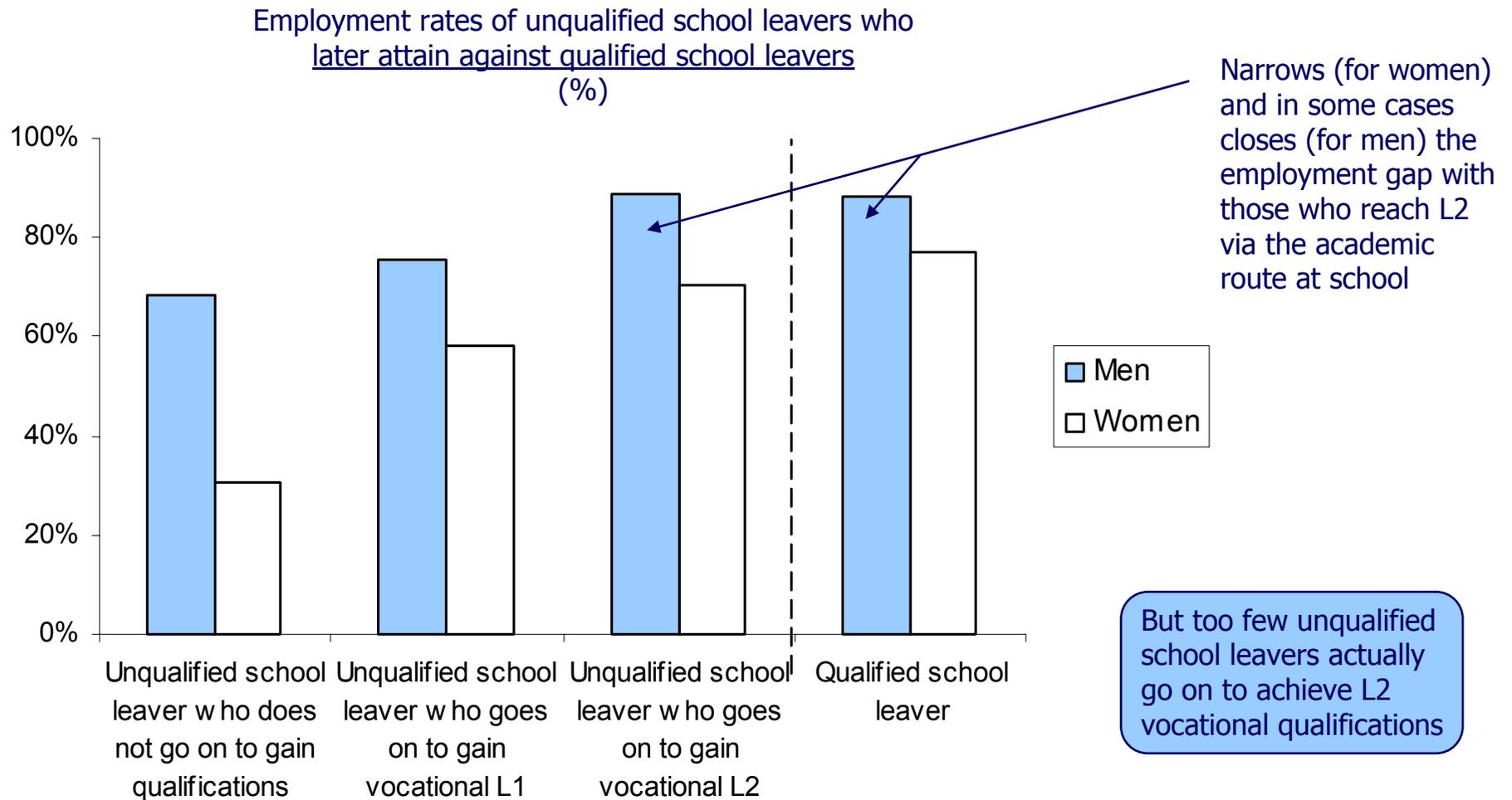
## Small group tuition

- Evidence on class sizes is mixed, but some evidence that children in smaller reception classes make more progress than those in larger. Reduction in reception class size from 25 to 15 associated with particularly large literacy gains for low attaining pupils - who are also more likely to be from lower SEGs
- And policy is to make small group tuition available where needed, typically for those pupils who have fallen behind (who may be disproportionately low SEG)

**Note:** (i) setting – pupils grouped according to ability in a particular subject; (ii) streaming – pupils grouped to classes according to overall assessment of ability; and (iii) banding – pupils grouped to broad bands across year group according to overall assessment of ability

Sources: Krueger 1999, 2003; William and Bartholomew (2004); Blatchford (2003) 'The Class Size Debate: Is Small Better?'

# Unqualified school leavers who go on to acquire a level 2 qualification have better job prospects

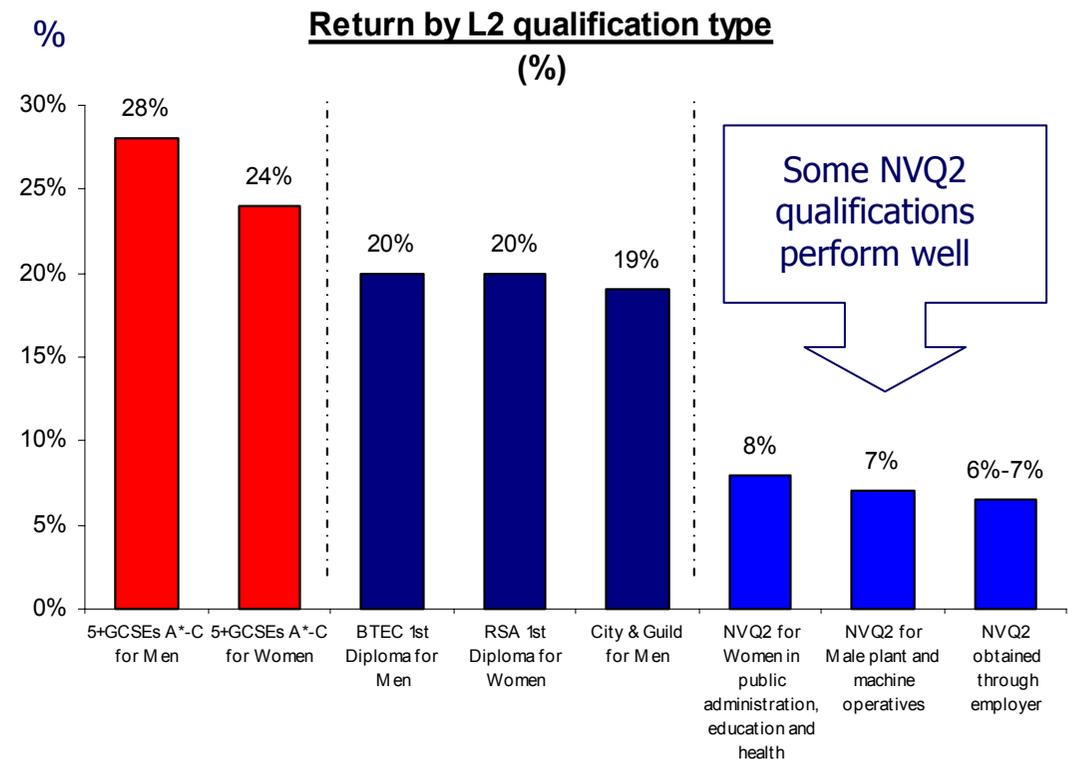


Source: McIntosh, S. (2004) 'The Impact of Vocational Qualifications on the Labour Market Outcomes of Low-Achieving School-Leavers', CEP Discussion Paper No621.

# Whilst wage returns to qualifications vary, there can be particular benefits to the low skilled from vocational level 2 courses

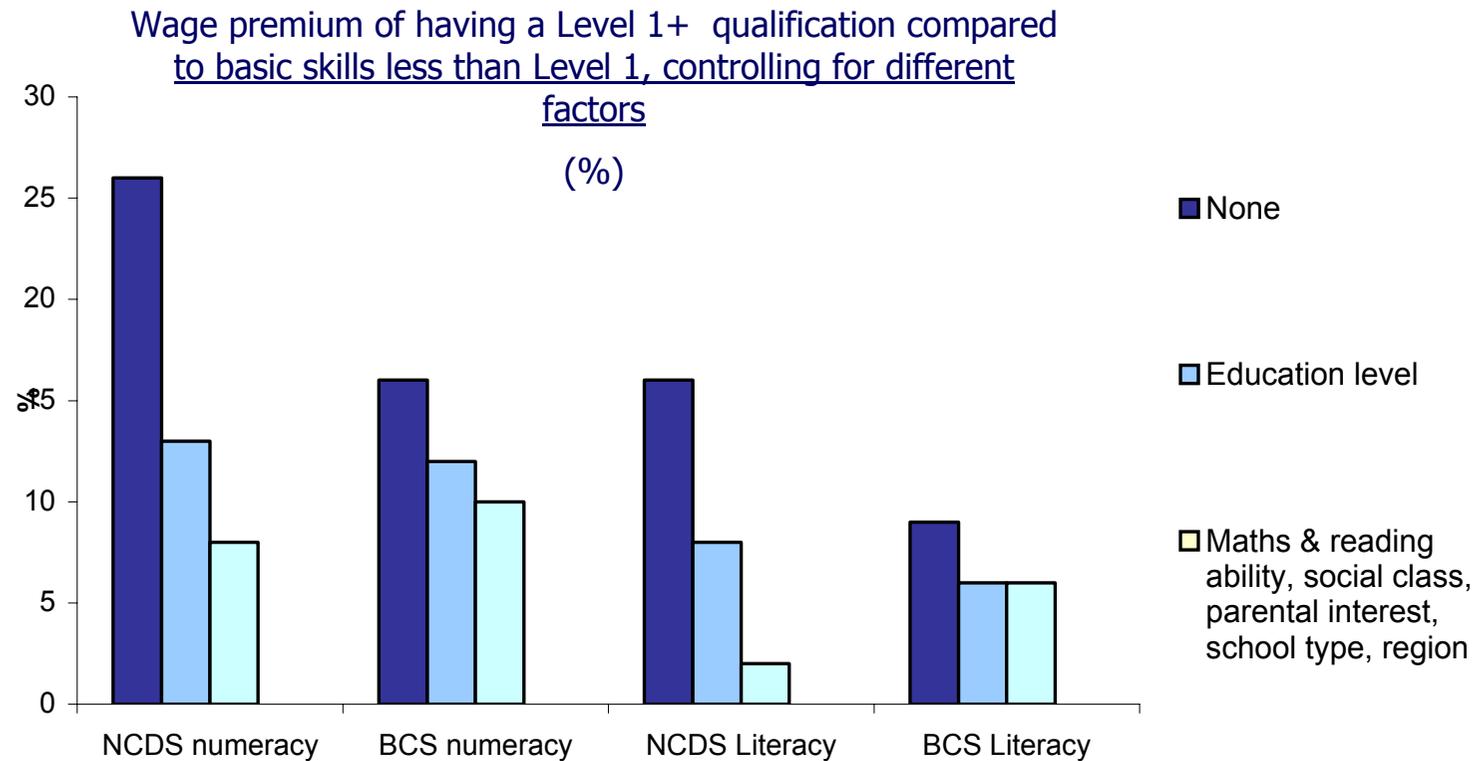
- Higher qualifications are associated with higher returns and there is a greater return to academic study than vocational
- But some L2 vocational qualifications deliver very good returns which narrow the gap with their academic counterparts. The highest returns are for males in the manufacturing sector
- Returns to NVQ2 are also high for low ability and low status individuals – 6% and 8% respectively
- And NVQ2 returns to individuals with no qualifications are better than for individuals who already have L1 qualifications
- NVQs also have better returns if employer-delivered as opposed to being delivered in off-site colleges

Important the positive messages regarding these vocational qualifications get through to the target groups



Source: Sources: McIntosh, S. (2004) 'The Returns to Apprenticeship Training', CEP Discussion Paper No 622; Dearden, L., McGranahan, M. and Sianesi, B. (2004) 'An In-depth Analysis of the Returns to National Qualifications Obtained at Level 2', CEE Discussion Paper No 46

# And gaining basic skills qualifications in adulthood also has sizeable wage returns



Returns are sizeable: the returns to literacy are between 2% and 6% depending on which controls are used in the modelling

As part of benefit of basic skills is increased likelihood of progression to further study, it may not be appropriate to control for education level. In this case, the returns to both numeracy and literacy would be even higher

Source: Byner et al (2001) using NCDS and BCS

# Contents

---

PART A: What does 'social mobility' mean for the DFES?

PART B: What is the attainment gap and what is happening to it?

PART C: What are the key drivers of the gap, and what do we know about what might narrow it?

**PART D: How might current policies contribute to narrowing the gap?**

- **Early years ages 0-5**
- **School ages 5-19**
- **Ages 19+**

PART E: Challenges and priorities

## **This section considers departmental policy and its contribution to narrowing the gap**

---

- The previous section set out what the main drivers of the attainment gap are and some generic conclusions about the kind of interventions that can affect it
- This section looks at the department's policies across the age range and considers what contribution they may be making to narrowing the gap
- We have prioritised policy areas that are directly relevant to attainment of lower socioeconomic groups and which evidence shows are making the most difference to narrowing the gap
- But there are some areas that we have not been able to cover due to lack of available evidence on impact on the attainment gap
- In further work we may wish to re-examine other policy areas that could have an indirect impact on narrowing the social class attainment gap

# Contents

---

PART A: What does 'social mobility' mean for the DFES?

PART B: What is the attainment gap and what is happening to it?

PART C: What are the key drivers of the gap, and what do we know about what might narrow it?

**PART D: How might current policies contribute to narrowing the gap?**

- **Early years ages 0-5**
- **School ages 5-19**
- **Ages 19+**

PART E: Challenges and priorities

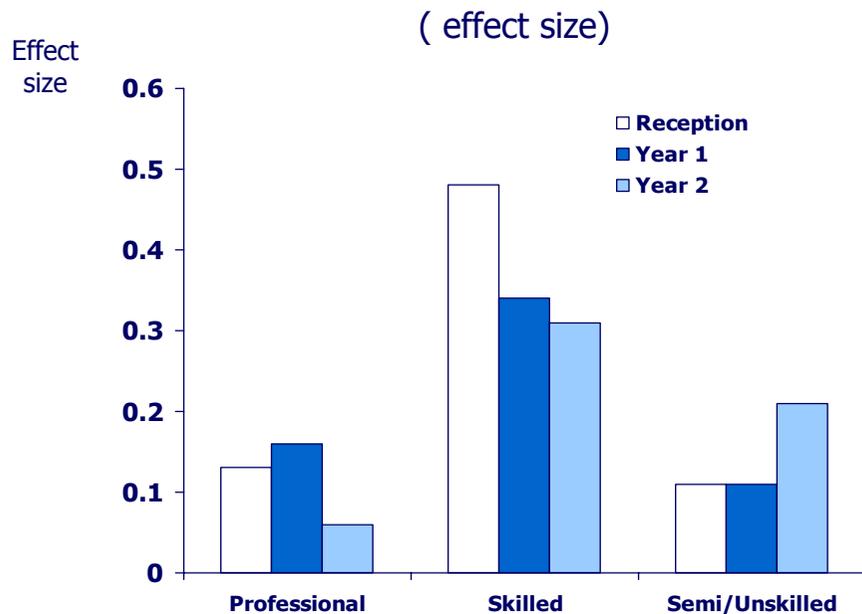
## Summary: Early years

---

- There is evidence of considerable benefit to lower socioeconomic groups of participation in high quality pre-school education
- The benefits appear to have a lasting effect into early schooling (KS1), and more so for children from lower socioeconomic groups
- Universal early years provision can help to prevent a widening of the social class gap but is unlikely to close it to a large degree as higher socioeconomic groups also accrue benefits from participation
- Children from lower socioeconomic groups are less likely to participate in early years' provision than those from higher socioeconomic groups – particularly younger children. Pilots to extend the free childcare offer to 2 year olds will give us more information on strategies for engaging with the most disadvantaged groups
- Whilst there is no direct evidence that childcare provision is of lower quality in deprived areas there are indications that this may be the case. We need a better understanding of the nature of this 'quality gap' and the impact it has on the development of children from lower socioeconomic groups
- The area-based aspects of the early years strategy will ensure many disadvantaged children are reached, but will always mean many do not benefit from action to improve their attainment (or address their under-attainment)

# Pre-school education has a positive effect on the attainment of lower socioeconomic groups, in particular on reading

Effect on reading attainment in primary school, of attending pre-school compared to not attending pre-school, for children from different socioeconomic groups: 2003-2005



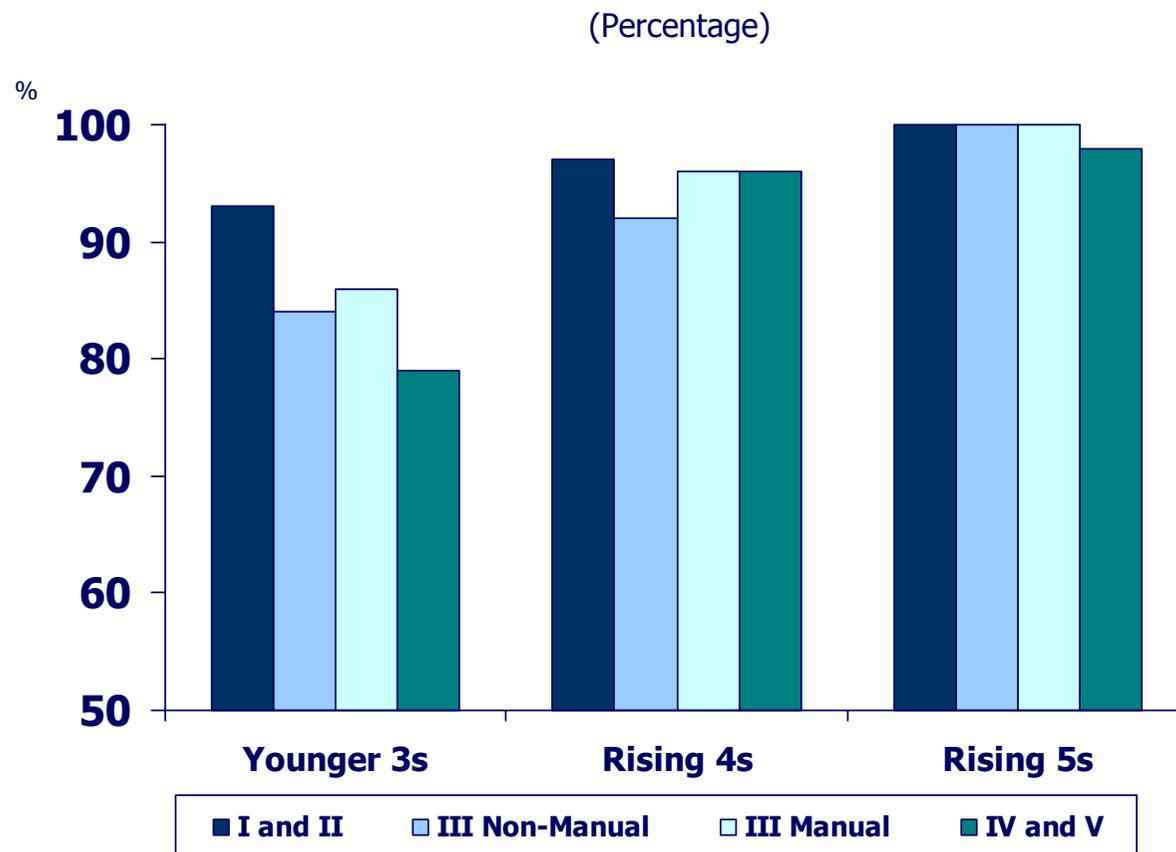
An **effect size** of around 0.2 means that the 'average' pupil who has attended pre-school has a reading test score that would exceed the score of around 60% of pupils who hadn't attended pre-school - this is a small-medium positive effect

- This chart shows that there is a positive effect of pre-school attendance on attainment in primary school, and that this increases at KS1 (year 2) for low SEG children. This is because low SEG children who do not attend pre-school fall further behind their peers who did
- Benefits for higher SEGs fall from the reception year of primary school to year 2 because high SEG children who did not attend pre-school begin to catch up with their peers who did
- For reading, though not maths, the effect of pre-school is greater for semi/unskilled groups than professional groups by Year 2 of primary school
- Pre-school attendance, on average, boosts children from lower socioeconomic groups above the minimum expected level 2 at KS1 making them ready for KS2
- Pre-school attendance also reduces the risk of developing SEN – this has disproportionate impact on lower socioeconomic groups, who are more likely to have SEN

Source: 'EPPE 3-11 Project. A longitudinal study funded by the DfES', (2005)

# Piloting free childcare to 2 year olds from lower income groups will tell us more about raising early years participation among these groups

Percentage of children of different age groups participating in nursery education by social class: 2004



The proportion of children participating in nursery education is high but lower at each age group for lower socioeconomic groups

The gap is particularly pronounced for younger 3 year olds. It may be wider still at younger ages, before the free childcare offer begins at age 3

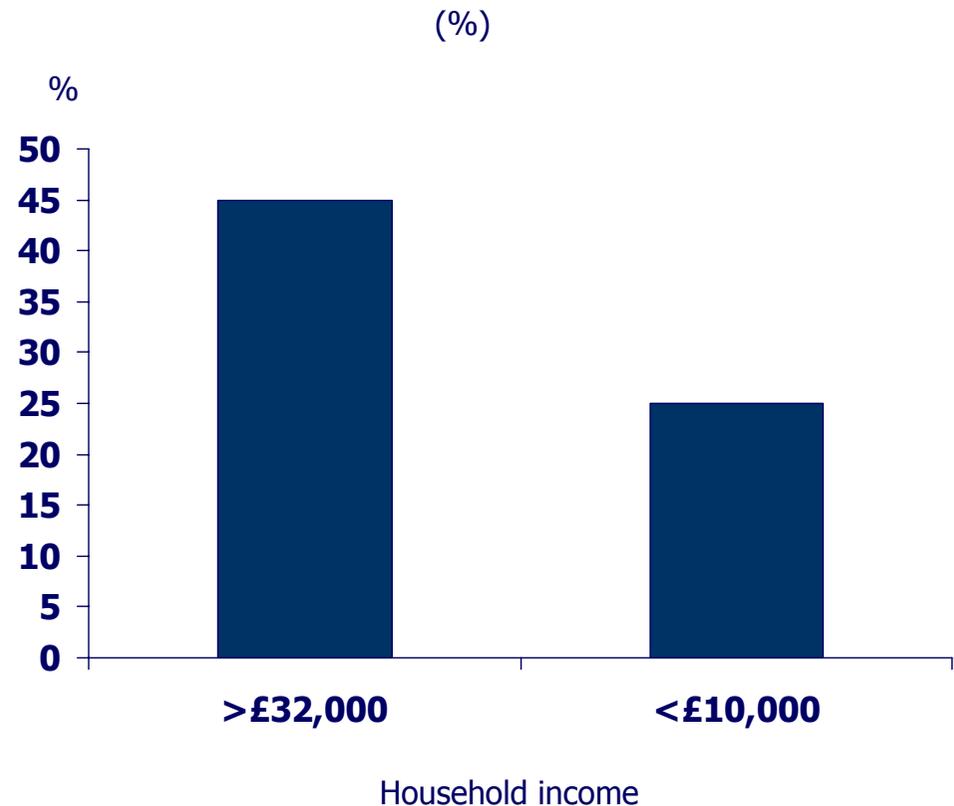
The targeted extension of the offer to 2 year olds will enable greater flexibility and access to provision in the 16 Local Authority pilot areas. This will give us more information on strategies for engaging with the most disadvantaged groups to increase participation

Source: 'Sixth survey of parents of three and four year old children and their use of early years services', (2004), DFES RR525

# Access to childcare provision is important to enable parental employment – this in turn is likely to benefit children’s attainment

- Children in workless households tend to experience particularly poor outcomes
- 10% of parents not working cite lack of availability of affordable childcare as a factor, and 48% said they would work if they could arrange good quality, affordable, flexible care
- Action to improve the supply of affordable childcare places in disadvantaged areas may help to get parents back to work
- Early indications suggest employment rates rose more in areas where the *SureStart* local programme was involved in the provision of childcare than in England as a whole – 2.8% compared to 1.2% between 2000 and 2002 – though it is too early to say definitively whether this is a direct result of *SureStart* childcare provision
- Latest survey of parents shows there is room for improvement in increasing parents’ knowledge of financial help available for childcare – especially amongst non-working families

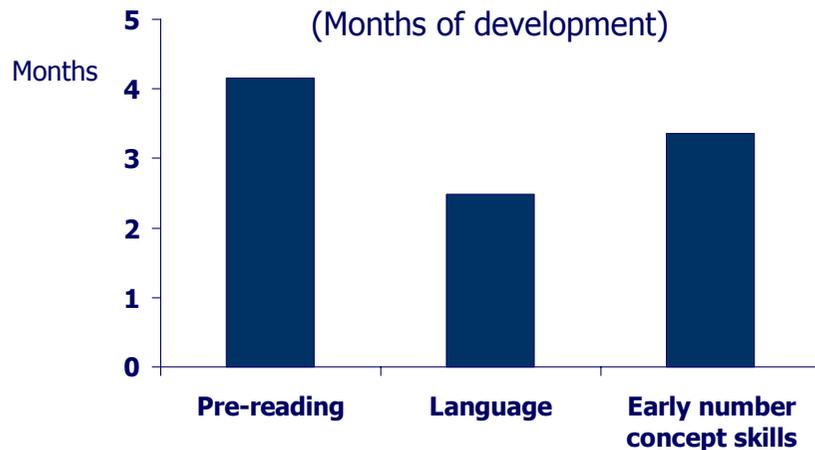
Percentage of parents reporting ‘very’ or ‘fairly good’ affordability of childcare in their area, by annual household income: 2004



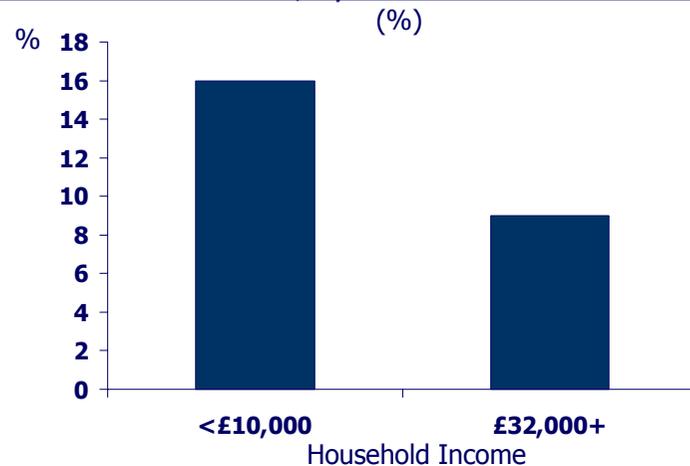
Sources: ‘Childcare and Early Years Provision: A Study of Parents’ Use, Views and Experiences’ (2006), DfES; Barnes et al (2005), ‘Changes in the Characteristics of SSLP areas R1-4, 2001/2-2002/3’, Report 08, DfES

# Quality of pre-school effect its impact on development; some evidence suggests deprived children may experience lower quality provision

Extra months of development acquired by attending an above average pre-school as compared with a below average one: 2003



Percentage of parents reporting 'very' or 'fairly poor' quality of childcare in their area, by annual household income: 2004



- The quality of pre-school has an effect on the impact pre-school has on child development (top chart)
- Whilst there is no direct evidence that the quality of pre-school provision is worse in deprived areas, the Parental Demand Survey indicates that low income groups perceive childcare quality to be poorer (bottom chart)
- And some early years settings in deprived areas, in particular primary schools with nursery and reception classes, have recruitment difficulties finding qualified and experienced staff – 27% in the 20 per cent most deprived wards report difficulties compared to 23% overall. And 4% cite bad reputation of area as a reason for recruitment difficulty compared to 2% nationwide

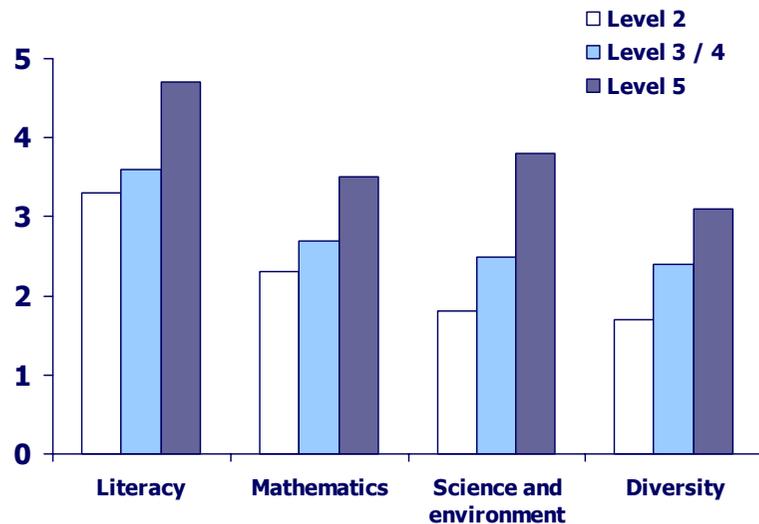
Note: An 'above average' pre-school is defined as a centre that is one standard deviation above the mean in terms of quality and a 'below average' pre-school is a centre that is one standard deviation below the mean in terms of quality

Sources: Internal analysis of EPPE for HMT (2003); 'Childcare and Early Years Provision: A Study of Parents' Use, Views and Experiences' (2006);

# Challenges remain in developing the workforce to achieve high quality childcare and early years' provision for all

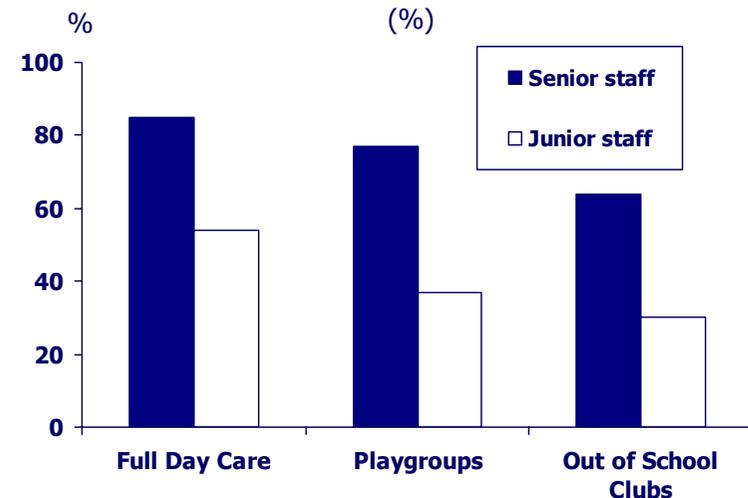
The quality of early years' provision is partly dependent on the staff employed

Managers' qualifications and quality of curriculum score  
(Curriculum quality score)



We still face a significant challenge in improving the qualifications of the early years' workforce

Proportion of Senior and Junior Childcare staff with L3+ qualifications (A-Level or equivalent), by setting: 2003



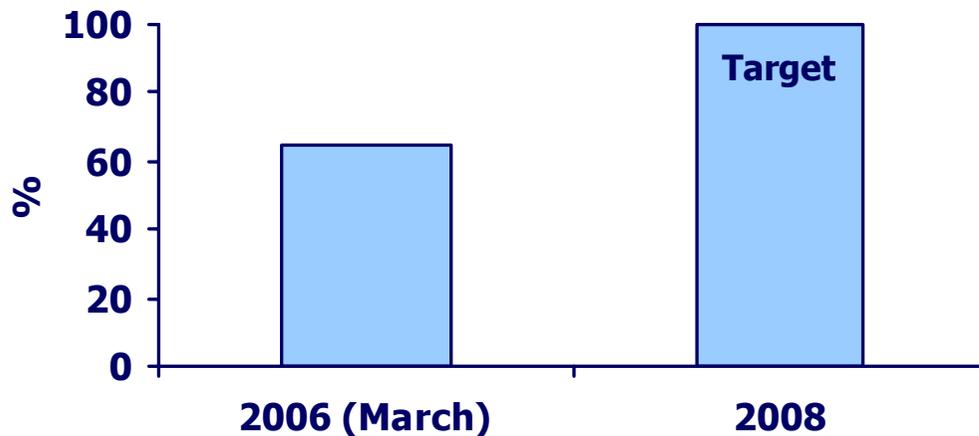
- It will be a challenge to improve the quality of the workforce while maintaining affordability of care
- Different types of workforce, with particular skills, are required in different childcare settings, but is notable that Full Day Care has staff with higher qualifications and is more likely to be used by higher income families

Sources: '2002/03 Childcare and Early Years Workforce Survey: Overview Report', (2004), DfES Sure Start Unit; EPPE

# The delivery of Sure Start Children's Centres and targeting their services at the very hardest to reach remains a significant challenge

Percentage of children in 30% most deprived Super Output Areas reached by Sure Start Children's Centres in March 2006 compared to 2008 target: 2006

(Percentage)



- The Department has a target to achieve 100% coverage for Sure Start Children's Centres in the 30% areas by 2008 – as the chart shows this is demanding
- Even once this target is achieved, not all deprived children will have access to full services at Sure Start Children's Centres – 25% of children from low income families live outside the most deprived areas
- In order to narrow the gap we need to ensure that benefits from services accrue to the most disadvantaged
- Early results from the Sure Start Local Programme evaluation suggest that in the most disadvantaged areas, the less deprived (non-teen mothers) benefit more from the programme than the most deprived (teen mothers, lone parents, workless households)
- Although both groups are still extremely deprived, it suggests more needs to be done to ensure the programme reaches all deprived groups.

Sources: 'National Evaluation of Sure Start' (Report 08, July 2005); DfES internal analysis

# Contents

---

PART A: What does 'social mobility' mean for the DFES?

PART B: What is the attainment gap and what is happening to it?

PART C: What are the key drivers of the gap, and what do we know about what might narrow it?

**PART D: How might current policies contribute to narrowing the gap?**

- **Early years ages 0-5**
- **School ages 5-19**
- **Ages 19+**

PART E: Challenges and priorities

## Summary: School age

---

This section looks at the evidence on interventions for school-age children. The nature of the available evidence means that interventions outside school are less comprehensively covered than in-school interventions.

### SCHOOL SYSTEM



- There are risks that the present floor target regime on its own doesn't sufficiently focus effort on the lowest attaining pupils within deprived schools, or on those children with potential to achieve very highly
- Funding is distributed at national level to recognise deprivation but this is often not passed down by Local Authorities to the most deprived schools

### CURRICULUM, TEACHING and PUPIL SUPPORT



- Greater use of personalised interventions such as catch-up literacy and small group tuition will help FSM children if targeted to benefit them
- Extended Schools could provide more of these services and childcare to enable parental employment. The challenge lies in motivating providers and designing a charging regime that allows all groups to access these services
- 14-19 interventions have the potential to promote post-16 participation by providing clearer pathways, financial support and better information

### TARGETED INTERVENTIONS

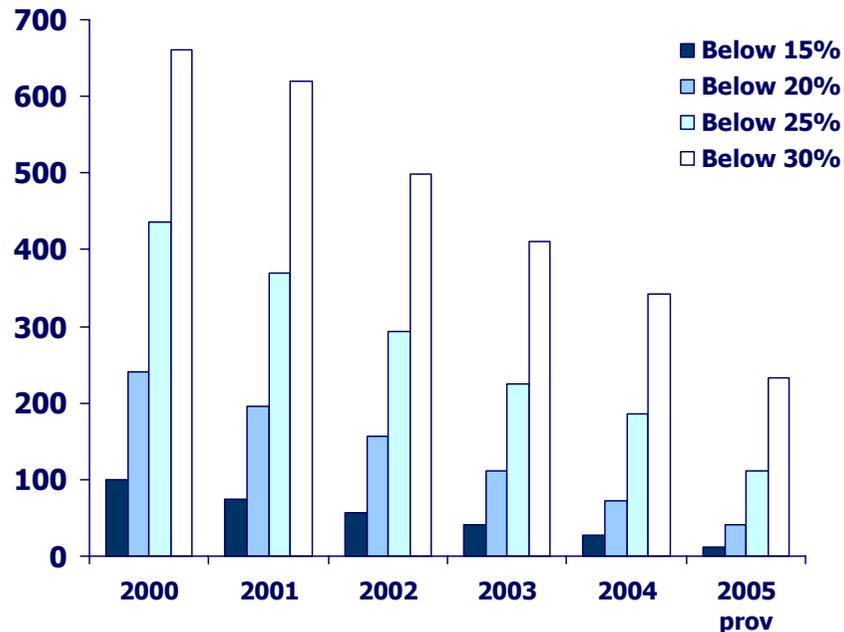


- Behaviour and attendance policies have improved attendance, which in due course we would expect to be translated into better attainment
- We need to develop a better evidence base on the impact of other policies targeted at particular groups

# Our target regime on its own risks not incentivising schools to sufficiently focus on the lowest attaining pupils, or those with potential for very high attainment

Number of schools with low percentages of pupils achieving 5 A\*-C target: 2000-2005

(Number of Schools)

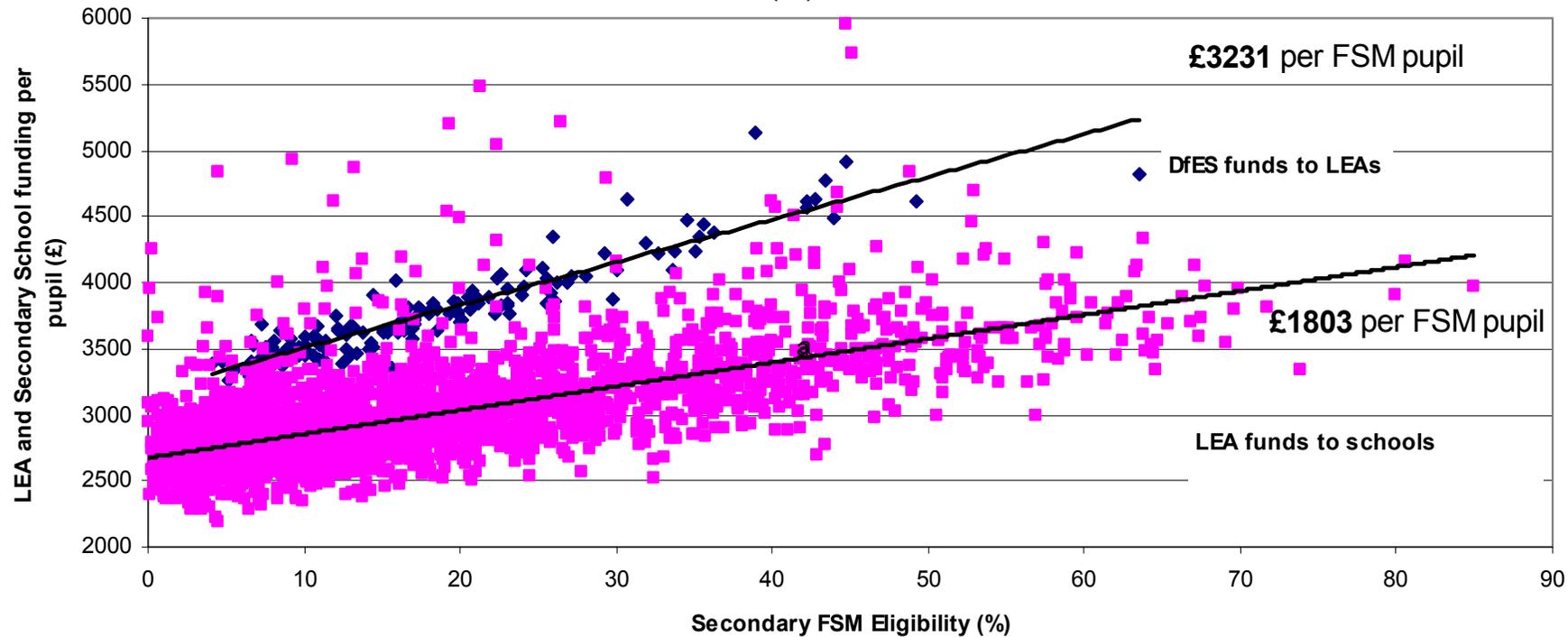


Sources: DfES SFR 02/2006; DfES internal analysis; Burgess, Propper, Slater and Wilson, (2005), 'Who wins and who loses from school accountability? The distribution of educational gain in English secondary schools', CMPO working paper No. 05/128

- Evidence suggests that targets do drive school behaviour - for example, whilst the 5+ A\*-C GCSE target has been rising steadily, the 5+ A\*-G measure, which is not a target, has remained flat
- Our deprivation-focused floor target is for no school to achieve below 25% 5+ A\*-C GCSEs, falling to 20%. Projections suggest this will be met by 2007
- But there is a risk that the floor target on its own does not impact enough on the most disadvantaged pupils – although all children have seen benefits, recent improvements in the most deprived schools have been higher for pupils not receiving FSM
- And research suggests that as the number of pupils at the 5+ A\*-C margin in a school increases, the less progress the lowest ability pupils make, as schools are incentivised to target marginal pupils – though the magnitude of these effects are quite small
- In general, UK data shows an upward drift in the GCSE attainment distribution rather than clear borderline effects at 5+ A\*-C

# DfES allocates funds to Local Authorities giving due weight to deprivation, but some LAs flatten this when distributing to schools

Total LEA funding per 11-15 pupil and devolved Secondary School Budget Share per pupil (including devolved standards funds) vs Secondary FSM Eligibility: 2002-3 (£)



Note: Although the data is from 02/03, it is not expected that newer data would change the overall picture  
 Source: 'Child Poverty: Fair Funding for Schools'. (2005), DfES/HMT

# There can be considerable variation in the amounts spent at different schools, and between those with similar levels of deprivation

	All Primary Schools	≥20% <35% FSM	≥35% <50% FSM	≥50% FSM
Average per pupil budget share	£2465	£2567	£2725	£2899
95 <sup>th</sup> percentile	£3300	£3266	£3412	£3693
5 <sup>th</sup> percentile	£1956	£2133	£2265	£2408
Minimum	£1014	£1045	£1203	£1272
Maximum	£18144	£12192	£5771	£18144

Per pupil spend can differ in schools with similar levels of high deprivation (share of pupils receiving FSM)

Source: 'Child Poverty: Fair Funding for Schools'. (2005), DfES/HMT; Results are shown for Primary Schools but similar levels of variation are found for Secondary

# Risk that a flattened distribution following LA allocation means funds are not getting through to disadvantaged pupils

Extra resources can benefit deprived pupils

- Schools face a range of additional costs related to teaching pupils from deprived backgrounds. A 2002 PwC report estimated these costs at £1,780 per pupil per annum – not necessarily enough to equalise outcomes but enough to meet certain types of identifiable classroom need such as additional learning assistants
- Evidence also suggests that extra resources targeted at FSM pupils can have a positive impact on attainment, particularly if used to support effective teaching and learning strategies

But LAs flatten distribution of deprivation funds

- Few LAs have assessed the costs of deprivation and target in order to meet them
- LAs tend to flatten distribution of funds for many reasons: on a historical basis; demand from schools; local pressures – either for less variation between schools or for simplicity. The existing regulatory framework places only a modest requirement on LAs to distribute funds to schools on the basis of deprivation
- There is poor understanding in some LAs of the national system of deprivation funding and the purpose of funds at local level, and confusion over the connection with SEN

And there are issues of usage within schools

- Funds are targeted at the whole school according to its level of deprivation but there is no guarantee that they will be used to benefit FSM pupils within the school
- And even if school-based targeting were to operate effectively it would still miss out the significant proportion of FSM pupils in low-FSM schools

**Next steps:** following the deprivation funding review, the Department is collecting information on how local authorities' school funding formulae address deprivation, and has commissioned a technical review of deprivation indicators. Both are due to report in the summer. Authorities will be expected to review their funding formula on the basis of this information for 2008/9 onwards and the process will be monitored by Children's Services Advisors

Source: 'Study of Additional Educational Needs, (2002) PwC; 'Child Poverty: Fair Funding for Schools'. (2005), DfES/HMT

# The evidence on Specialist schools and EiC interventions suggests they have a positive impact on attainment for more deprived pupils

---

## Specialist Schools

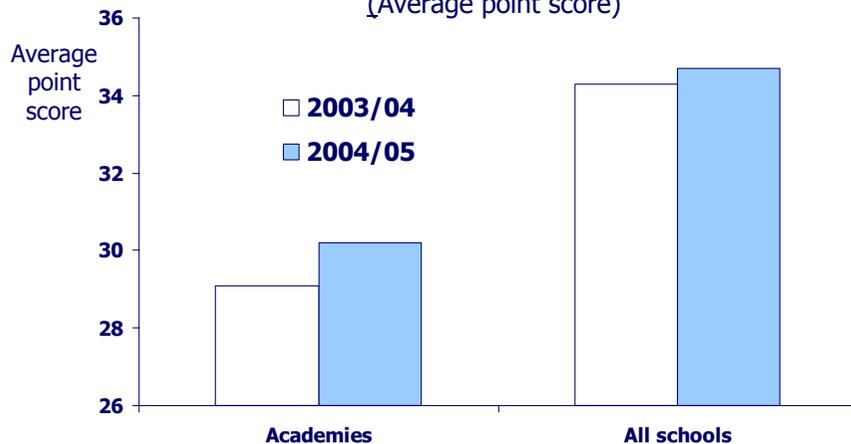
- Specialist schools account for around 75% of secondary schools – the aim is for 80% to be specialist by September 2006
- Around 12% of pupils in Specialist schools were receiving FSM in 2005
- At all levels of school FSM band, in both 2000 and 2005, pupils in Specialist Schools achieved higher absolute GCSE results than Non-Specialist schools. And Specialist schools' GCSE performance improved slightly more than that of non-Specialist schools

## Excellence in Cities

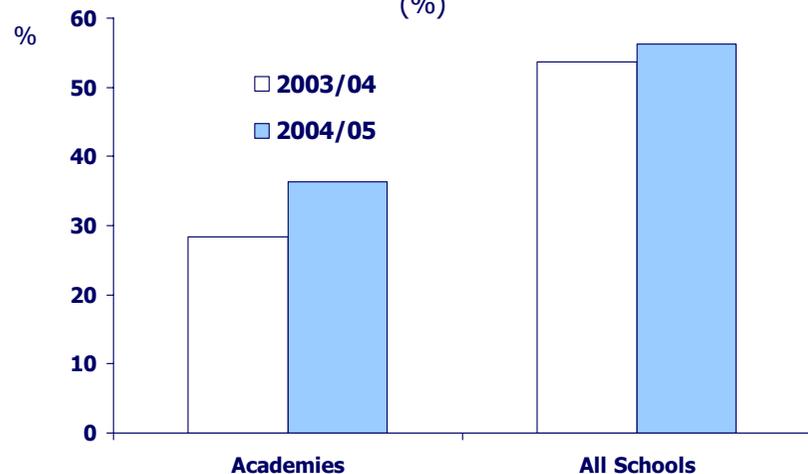
- EiC and Excellence Clusters are focused on deprived areas at LA level, and on pockets of deprivation below LA level – around 25% of pupils in EiC schools were eligible for FSM in 2005
- Initial quantitative evaluation results from early EiC did not find significant benefits to the programme, but more recent data suggests faster improvement in EiC areas - though we cannot be certain whether improvements are down to EiC policy
- Programmes such as study support are included in EiC – see slides 63 and 64

# Early evidence suggests that improvements in Academies' attainment are likely to benefit deprived pupils

KS3 average points score in Academies compared to all schools: 2003/04-2004/05  
(Average point score)



Proportion of 15 year olds achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSE or equivalent, in Academies compared to all schools: 2003/4-2004/5  
(%)



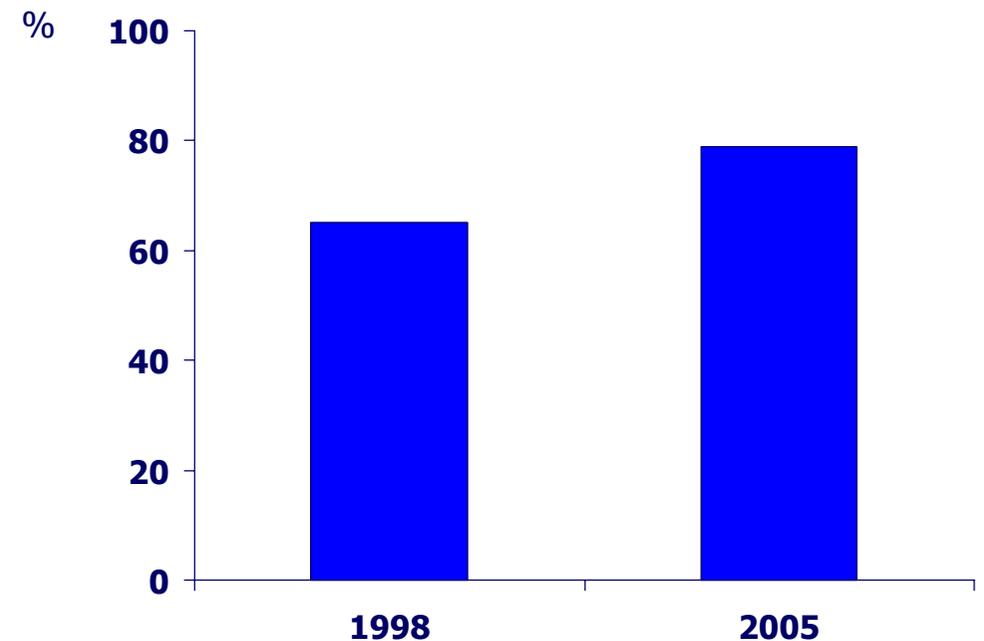
- Academies have higher than average proportions of pupils receiving FSM - just under 40% in 2005
- Academies are starting from a lower base than the national average but making more progress:
  - Academies' KS3 results improved nearly 3 times more than the national average (top chart)
  - And at GCSE, their performance improved more than the national average – although the proportion is still lower (bottom chart)
- Comparing Academies to a more appropriate control group of similar schools, based on KS2 prior attainment and FSM composition, also shows that value added between KS3-KS4 was higher in Academies than the control group
- It will be important to monitor the relative attainment of pupils receiving FSM as Academies become more established

Sources: National Curriculum Assessment, GCSE and Equivalent Results and Associated Value Added Measures in England 2003/4 and 2004/05 (Revised), DfES SFR01/2005 and SFR02/2006; Internal analysis

# The introduction of the Literacy Hour in 1998 has raised overall attainment, and has a disproportionate effect on lower ability pupils

- Evidence on the importance of adult basic skills shows that literacy matters for individuals' life outcomes
- The Literacy Hour introduced daily, focused sessions of literacy teaching in every primary school and contributed to an increase in overall attainment in English since 1998
- Evaluation of the pilot (the National Literacy Project) found a large increase in attainment in reading and English for pupils in NLP schools as compared to those not exposed to the literacy hour between 1996 and 1998
- And there were disproportionate benefits for pupils in urban schools, and for pupils with lower levels of attainment, which tends to correlate with disadvantage
- The evaluation also identified complementary effects of the Literacy Hour on Maths attainment
- Programmes of study support and reading recovery also have a disproportionate impact on low SEG pupils, as should the measures on first teaching adopted in response to the Rose review.

Percentage of 11 year Olds Reaching the 'Expected' Level 4 at KS2 in English: 1998 and 2005 (%)



Sources: Rose Review final report (2006); Machin and McNally, (2004), 'The Literacy Hour'

# Initial indications suggest Extended Schools have potential benefits, but it is important that charging regimes are designed so all groups can access services

---

Aim is for core offer to include range of services such as study support and childcare, as well as referral to other services, including parental support



- Personalisation evidence indicates potential benefits of some individual services e.g. study support services
- Where childcare enables parental employment there may be knock-on benefits to children
- There is a lack of evidence about the effectiveness of different parenting support interventions. But the potential gains are great so important to find effective interventions that can be scaled-up

Evaluation of Full Service Extended Schools contains extensive qualitative evidence of benefits but not yet quantitative



- Positive anecdotal findings emerging from schools around raised attainment, pupil engagement with learning and growing trust between families and schools
- Multi-agency working bringing benefits to vulnerable children and their families

Moving to universal provision of the core offer avoids pitfalls of area targeting, but service charges may limit access for disadvantaged families



- Charging regimes need to be designed to ensure all groups can and do access services and enjoy the potential benefits
- And extended schools need to be effectively motivated to provide services

# The Schools White Paper reforms seek to increase parental involvement in their child's education

---

- A key objective of the Schools White Paper reforms is to move education provision to a new level, ensuring that **every** child has access to high quality, personalised education
- The reforms seek to put parents at the heart of learning. This principle is consistent with the evidence presented earlier in Part C about the very significant influence social and family factors have on attainment.
- In terms of reducing social class attainment gaps, the challenge is to ensure that the White Paper reforms reach and engage parents of children from more deprived backgrounds. A number of initiatives have particular potential to help:

## Fair Admissions

- The *Education Bill* explicitly seeks to promote fair admissions to ensure families from more deprived backgrounds are not disadvantaged, by ruling out interviewing and new selection, strengthening the School Admissions Code that schools will have to follow, and allowing schools to use banding

## Choice

- The reforms will provide every parent with the information they need to make informed decisions when choosing schools. There will be provision of targeted choice advice to facilitate informed choice, particularly among the most disadvantaged and hardest to reach

## Access

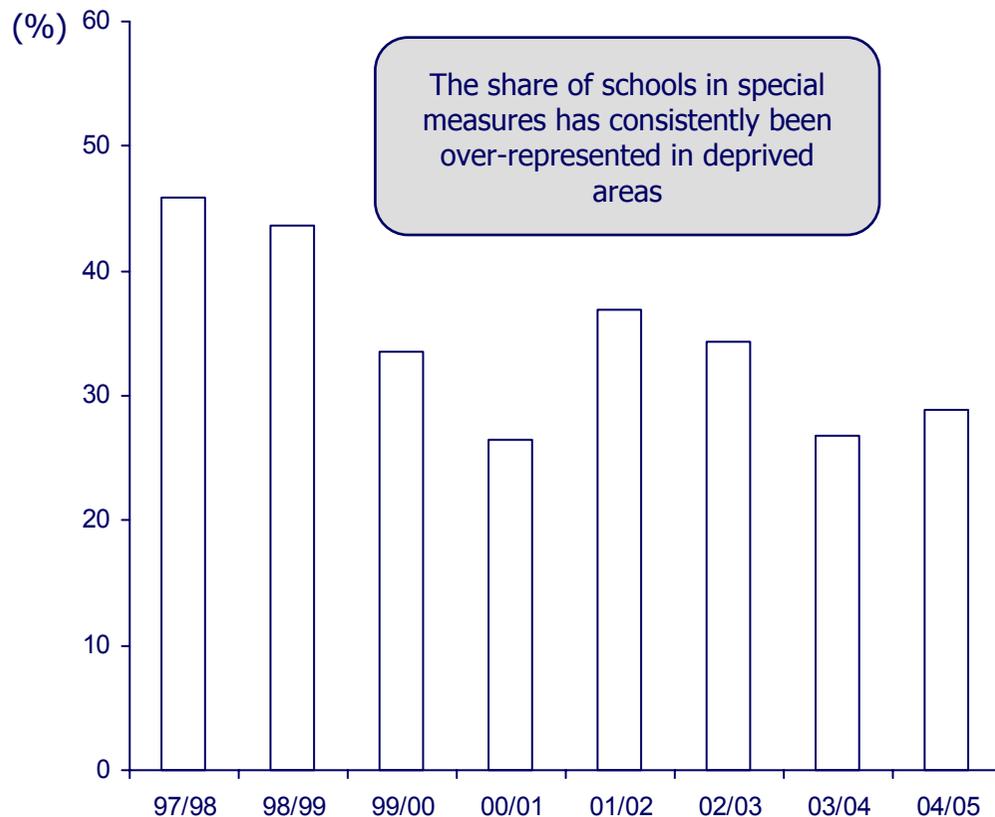
- New school transport arrangements for pupils from low income families will support access to schools that financial constraints may have prevented

## Personalisation

- The reforms seek to create a step change in the personalised learning support available to every child – again this is consistent with the evidence presented in Part C about how different approaches work for different children.

# Inspection regimes for failing schools also benefit more deprived pupils

**Proportion of Schools in Special Measures Located in the 20% Most Deprived Super Output Areas<sup>(1)</sup> in England: 1997/98 – 2004/05 (%)**



- Interventions to turn failing schools round, such as placing them in special measures, have had a disproportionate impact on schools that have socio-economically disadvantaged intakes
- In 2002/03, nearly 40% of primary schools fell in the lowest deprivation band (low proportions of FSM pupils), but these schools represented around 20% of the schools placed in special measures. By contrast, schools with high proportions of FSM pupils made up just over 15% of all primary schools, but these represented approximately 30% of all schools placed in special measures<sup>(2)</sup>
- Since 1995/96, a disproportionate number of schools from the poorest 20% of areas have been placed in special measures. However the proportion has tended to drop since the late 1990s, probably reflecting the impact of the *Excellence in Cities* initiatives introduced in 1999/00
- There is some evidence<sup>(2)</sup> that the effectiveness of schools matters most for pupils from more deprived backgrounds and/or pupils with low early achievement

(1) Deprivation measure used is the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation based on Super Output Areas (SOAs).

(2) See: Sammons, Pam, *School Effectiveness and Equity: Making Connections*, University of Nottingham, 2006

Source: DfES internal analysis

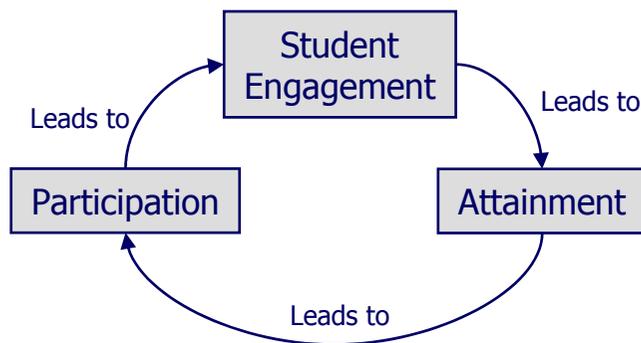
# 14-19 reforms have great potential to re-engage young people with education, and should benefit lower SEGs

---

## 14-19 Qualifications and Curriculum Reforms have Two Broad Objectives

---

### 1. Breaking the cycle of student disengagement



### 2. Improving attainment

Aside from improving participation, the reforms also seek to improve the overall quality of 14-19 education to meet the requirements of employers, the economy and higher education institutions

## 14 – 19 Reforms' Impact on Social Mobility

---

The new specialised diplomas will be high quality qualifications, attractive to students of all abilities, capable of providing a route to HE and likely to engage and motivate a wider group of young people.



Among those doing specialised diplomas will be FSM pupils, particularly that large number who are capable of high achievement but not currently well engaged.



If the new Diplomas increase engagement, attainment and participation, benefits will include higher overall attainment as well as contributing to a reduction in the attainment gap

# Reaching our aspirational goal of 90% of 17 year olds in education or training by 2015 means tackling low participation among FSM pupils

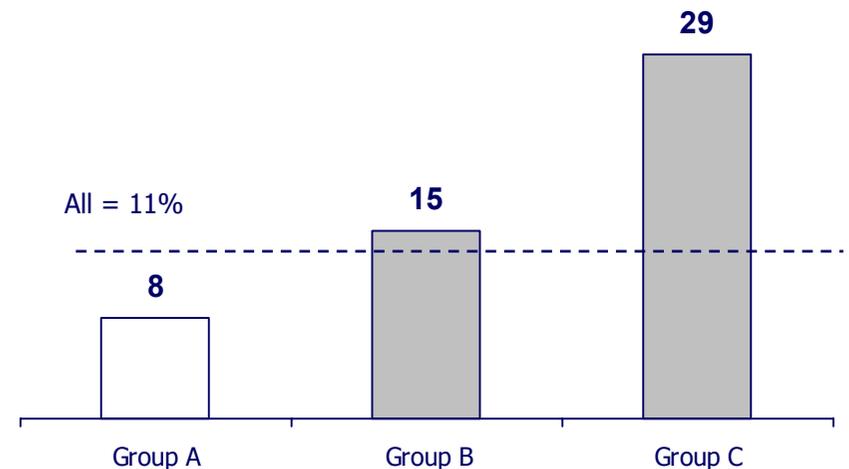
There are currently a large number of young people not participating in education and training after the age of 16 ...

... Two of these groups have considerably above average shares of pupils receiving FSM

## Grouping of 16 Year Olds Based on Participation and Attainment

Group	Attributes		% of Total Cohort
	Participating Post 16?	GCSE Attainment Level	
A	No	5+ A*-C	4
B	No	1-4 A*-C or 5+ D-G	10
C	No	1-4 D-G or none	4

## Proportion of 16 Year Old Groups that were FSM at KS4 (%)



(1) The aspirational goal is to have 90% of 17 year olds in education or training by 2015.  
Sources: 14-19 Segmentation work (unpublished) based on 2004 YCS and PLASC FSM data.

# IFP aims to re-engage young people through enhanced vocational and work-related learning opportunities, with positive participation effects

The Increased Flexibilities Pathway programme (IFP) seeks to create enhanced vocational and work-related learning opportunities for 14-16 year olds with low KS3 results, particularly for pupils who have disengaged from the traditional offer. It is delivered collaboratively, with colleges and schools in partnership and now involves around half of secondary schools and three-quarters of FE colleges in England.

## Evidence from the first cohort of IFP pupils suggests a mixed impact on attainment...

- Pupils who participated in IFP and took GNVQs and NVQs attained higher points at KS4 than similar pupils who did not undertake any vocational qualifications. Those taking vGCSEs performed as well as expected.
- Those studying vocational GCSEs and GNVQs outside of IFP also attained better outcomes than expected.
- Lower attaining pupils at KS3 benefited more in terms of total points achieved at KS4.
- Surveys of IFP pupils revealed a positive change in attitude towards school in the second year of the programme. IFP pupils had also developed their social skills as well as increased confidence in their employability skills.

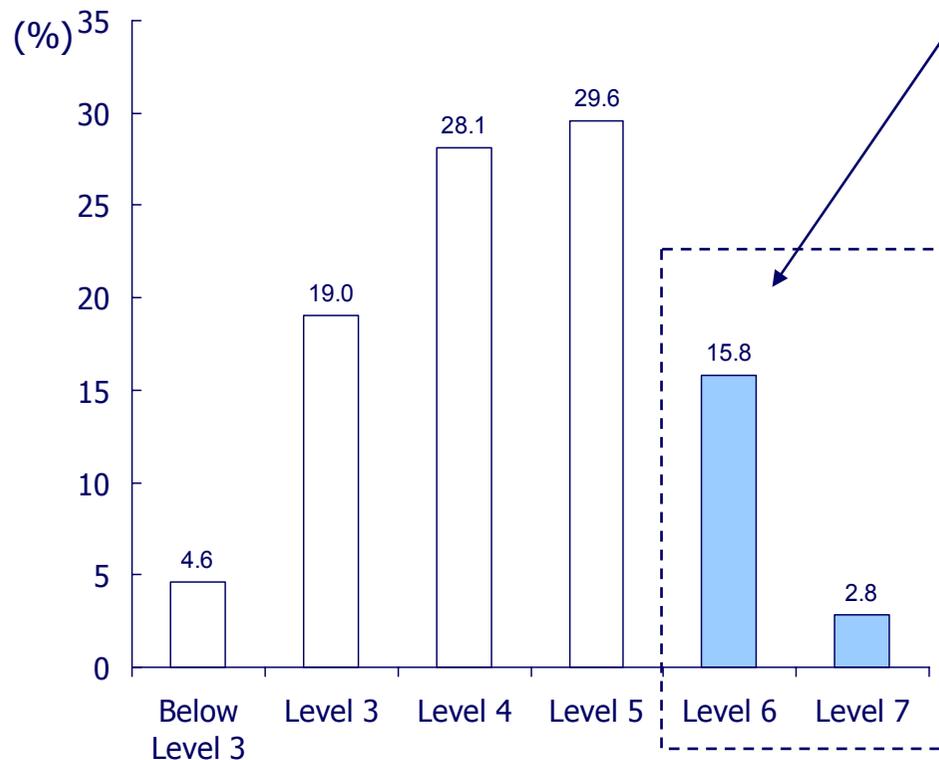
## ... however, there appears to be evidence of higher than expected post-16 learning and training...

- Surveys of young people and reports from schools from the first IFP cohort showed 82% had continued in full-time education and work-based learning
- This shows similar levels to the whole cohort where 84%<sup>(1)</sup> continued in FTE and WBL ...
- No control group is available to give precise "impact" figure...
- ... BUT the IFP cohort had lower attainment levels at KS3 compared to their peers. For example, 49% of IFP pupils achieved Level 5 or above in English compared to 67% of all Y10 students in IFP schools

Source: Golden et al (2005) *Evaluation of IFP: Outcomes for the 1<sup>st</sup> Cohort* DfES Research Report 668  
Except for (1): SFR 27/2005 (Revised) June 2005

# We also want to stretch talented pupils from more deprived backgrounds

Percentage of FSM Pupils Who Achieve Various KS3 Average Levels: 2003  
(% of FSM Pupils<sup>(1)</sup>)



Nearly 20% of all FSM pupils are well above expected attainment levels at KS3 – we want to ensure that these pupils are stretched so as to continue on this trajectory

- 84% of those FSM pupils who achieved Level 6 and above at KS3 went on to achieve 5+A\*-C GCSEs at age 16. The equivalent number for non-FSM pupils was 93%.
- Our policies must both bring lower FSM attainers up, but also stretch above-average performers and help retain their trajectory of high performance
- The recent Schools White Paper and 14-19 reforms are both seeking to introduce initiatives to stretch students who are doing well – these policies and other Gifted and Talented initiatives must be designed to also reach students from more deprived backgrounds

(1) Total number of FSM pupils in this year was 74,845 (13% of all students); Note figures are for pupils who were KS3 in 2003 and took KS4 in 2005

Source: National Pupil Database 2005

# There has been an increase in participation from under-represented groups following introduction of EMAs

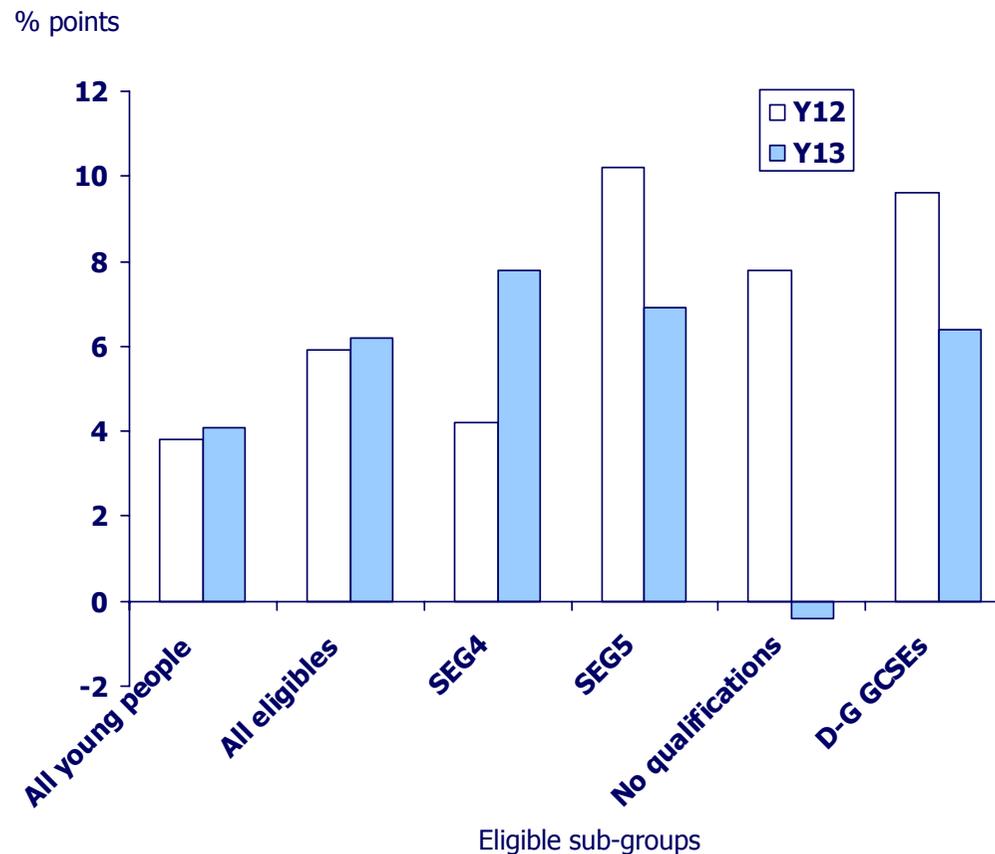
## Information and Guidance services

also have a small positive impact on participation and aspirations

Connexions reduced number of young people not in education, employment or training by up to 35% in some regions between 2002 and 2004.

Connexions is particularly important in disadvantaged schools without sixth forms and with stable or falling participation rates

Increase in participation in Years 12 and 13 from EMA pilot evaluation: 2002-2005  
(Percentage points)



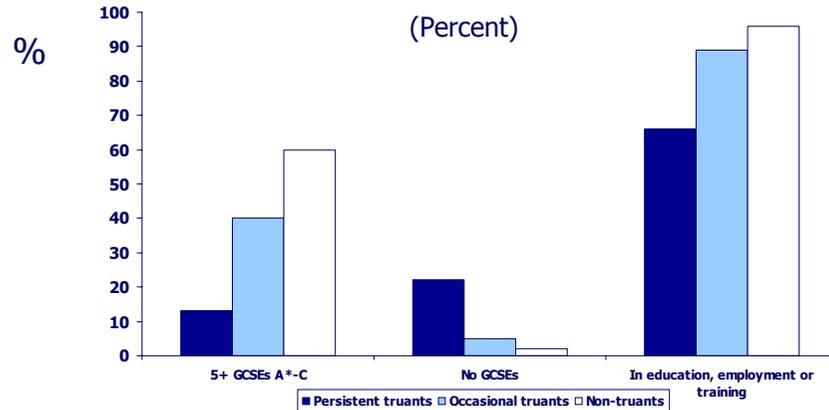
- Post-16 participation increased for eligible 16 year olds by 5.9 percentage points, higher than for those not eligible – and particularly strong impact for key target groups such as low attainers and very low socioeconomic groups.
- Despite this strong effect, no statistically significant impact on attainment is yet apparent

Source: EMA Pilot evaluation (2005); Connexions evaluation (2004)

# Behaviour and attendance programmes appear to be effective but the impact on attainment has yet to come through

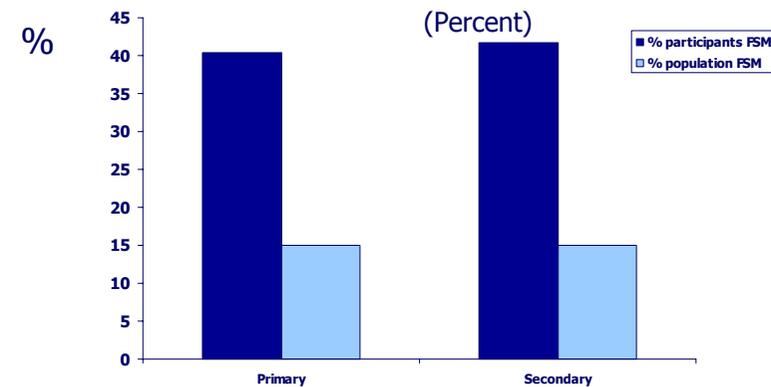
Persistent truancy is major risk factor for low attainment and NEET status

Reported truancy and later outcomes for 16 year olds: 2002



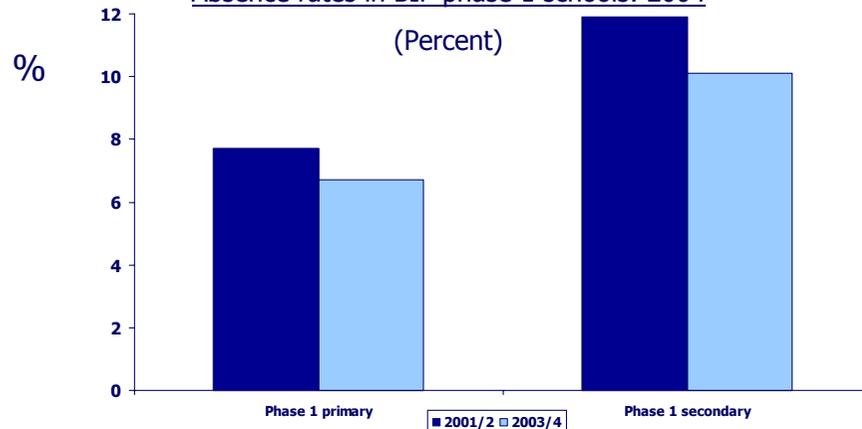
BIP participants were disproportionately FSM recipients

FSM status of BIP phase 1 participants and population: 2004



Evaluation suggests that BIPs have been effective in improving attendance

Absence rates in BIP phase 1 schools: 2004



- Evaluation of BIP phase 1 found that falls in absence rates were small but significant, and greater than in other schools
- There were statistically significant rises in some attainment indicators in BIP schools but overall no KS2, KS3 or GCSE improvement
- BIPs targeted by area deprivation - best practice intended to transfer elsewhere but no analysis of whether this has happened or not

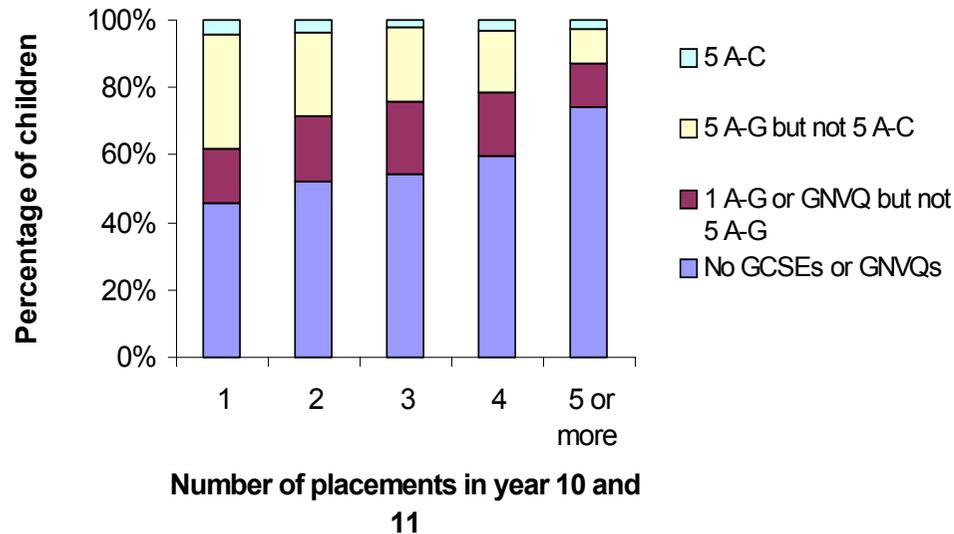
Sources: Youth Cohort Study 2002 quoted in "Improving School Attendance in England", February 2005, NAO; 'Research and Evaluation of the Behaviour Improvement Programme', November 2005, Institute of Education

# FSM overlaps with other low attainment groups so policies to raise their attainment may also impact on the gap

## LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

- Main barriers to LAC attainment are: instability of care; school attendance problems; lack of support and encouragement; mental and physical health problems
- LAC in stable placements have higher attainment
- Under 16s in stable placements for 2 yrs or more has increased from 60% in 2001 to 65% in 2005.
- But still a long way to go to target of 80% by 2008

Attainment of LAC by number of placements in yr 10 and yr11: 2004  
(Percentage)



Source: LAC Census, 2004

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Evidence suggests that pre-school attendance reduces the risk of being SEN for those most at risk

It is more difficult to measure the impact of mainstreaming on the outcomes of children with SEN however, as those in special schools are very different from those in mainstream schools.

## BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

Aiming High is main intervention to address underachievement in ethnic minority pupils.

Early qualitative evaluation of Aiming High suggests a positive impact on school ethos but no quantitative evidence of impact on attainment yet.

# Contents

---

PART A: What does 'social mobility' mean for the DFES?

PART B: What is the attainment gap and what is happening to it?

PART C: What are the key drivers of the gap, and what do we know about what might narrow it?

**PART D: How might current policies contribute to narrowing the gap?**

- **Early years ages 0-5**
- **School ages 5-19**
- **Ages 19+**

PART E: Challenges and priorities

## Summary: 19+

---

- While prior attainment is the key determinant of access to Higher Education, aspirations and expectations still play a critical role. Early findings suggest *AimHigher* is having an impact on aspirations but too early to tell if this will have a knock-on effect to increased participation in HE
- HE funding reforms are designed to improve financial support to students from low income families. There is no evidence so far of either a positive or negative impact on participation in HE for these students
- Raising the skill levels of adults with few or no qualifications has potential intergenerational benefits, but making significant inroads into the stock is a big challenge, and uptake of learning will not be enough to have a significant impact on the gap
- Policies to engage adults in learning are targeted at those with the lowest skills but increasing take-up is challenging. And evidence from the National Employer Training pilots suggested a need for increased targeting of the majority of employers who do not already provide time off for low skilled employees to train to qualifications

## ***Aimhigher* has raised attainment and aspirations of under-represented pupils, which in the longer term should lead to increased HE participation**

**Targeted**

- Operates most intensively in deprived areas
- Targets pupils from groups traditionally under-represented in HE; some work also done with gifted and talented young people – the top 5-10% of each year group in KS 3 and 4

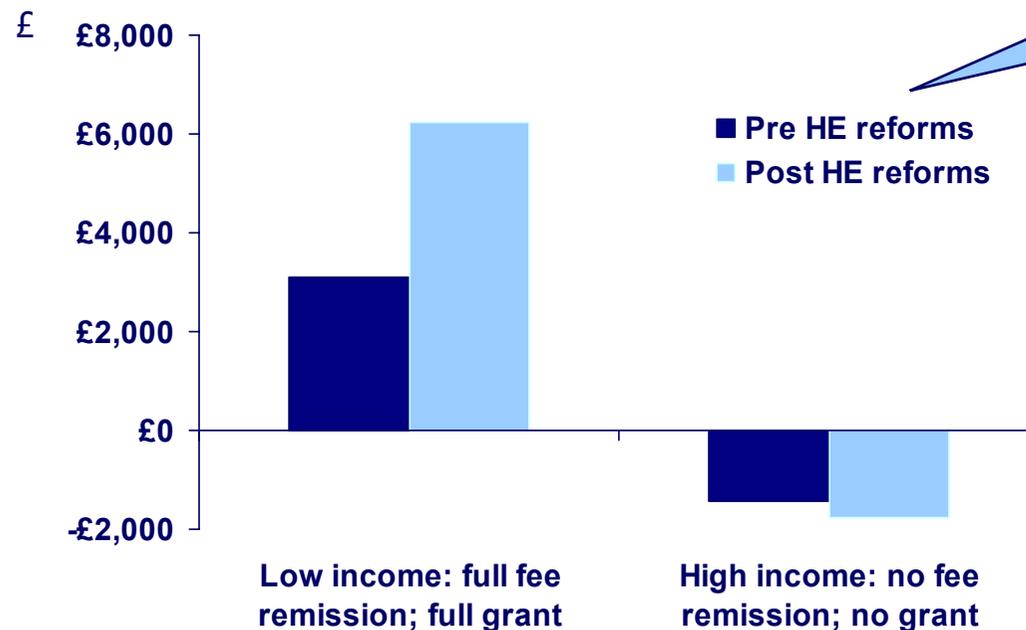
### Impact on Attainment and Aspirations

	Impact on KS3 Maths	Impact on GCSE points scores	Impact on aspirations
Average improvement	Increase of around 5 percentage points in the proportion of Year 9 pupils attaining levels 4,5,and 6	2.5 points	Increase of 4 percentage points in proportion of Yr 11 pupils intending to go to HE

Source: Aimhigher: Excellence Challenge evaluation reports

# HE funding reforms have disproportionate benefit to lower socioeconomic groups, but improving levels of participation remains a challenge

Estimated change in the financial value of support (less tuition fees) to students from low and high income families: 2006/7 prices



HE funding reforms significantly improve the financial value of support for entrants from low income families who receive full government support.

- Canadian and Australian evidence indicates that changes in fee regime are unlikely to lead to fall in applications from lower SEGs
- UCAS data on applications for 2006 indicates no change in the socioeconomic make-up of applications
- Institutions will now offer bursaries to students from low income families which may increase their participation in HE compared to students from higher income families

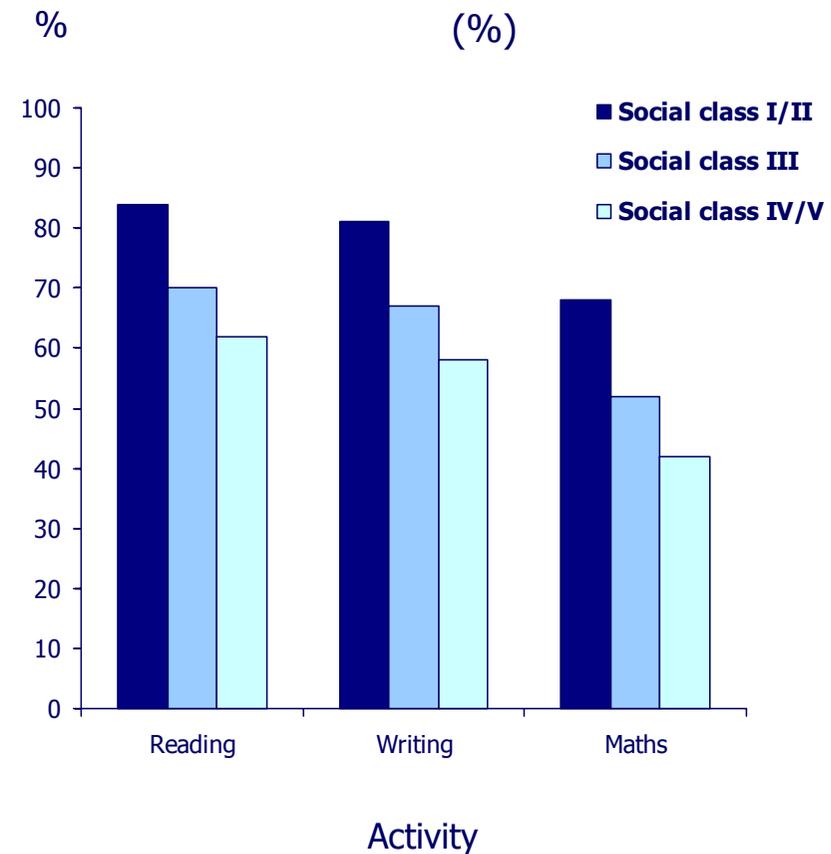
Caveats on modelling: (1) Pre HE reforms = 2003/04; Post HE reforms = 2006/07; (2) Government support is made up of fee remission, grant and student loans; (3) Assumptions: Entrant age = 18; course length = 3 years; full take-up/take-out of support; no student earnings; no student bursaries; post HE reforms tuition fee = £3000; prices constant in 2006/07; discount rate = 3.5%; real wage growth = 2%; loan repayment rate = 9%; alpha factor = 0.8

Source: Unpublished internal DfES analysis

# Improving basic skills through the Adult Basic Skills Strategy may contribute to intergenerational mobility

- Parents' confidence in helping their children with reading, writing and maths is significantly influenced by their own social class
- There is also evidence that children's performance in Early Years is influenced by parental literacy levels
- Children of parents with Entry Level 2 or lower literacy or numeracy had the lowest average scores in cognitive assessments
- Improving adult literacy and numeracy through the Adult Basic Skills Strategy may therefore help to improve attainment of children in lower socioeconomic groups
- And could reinforce positive attitudes to education

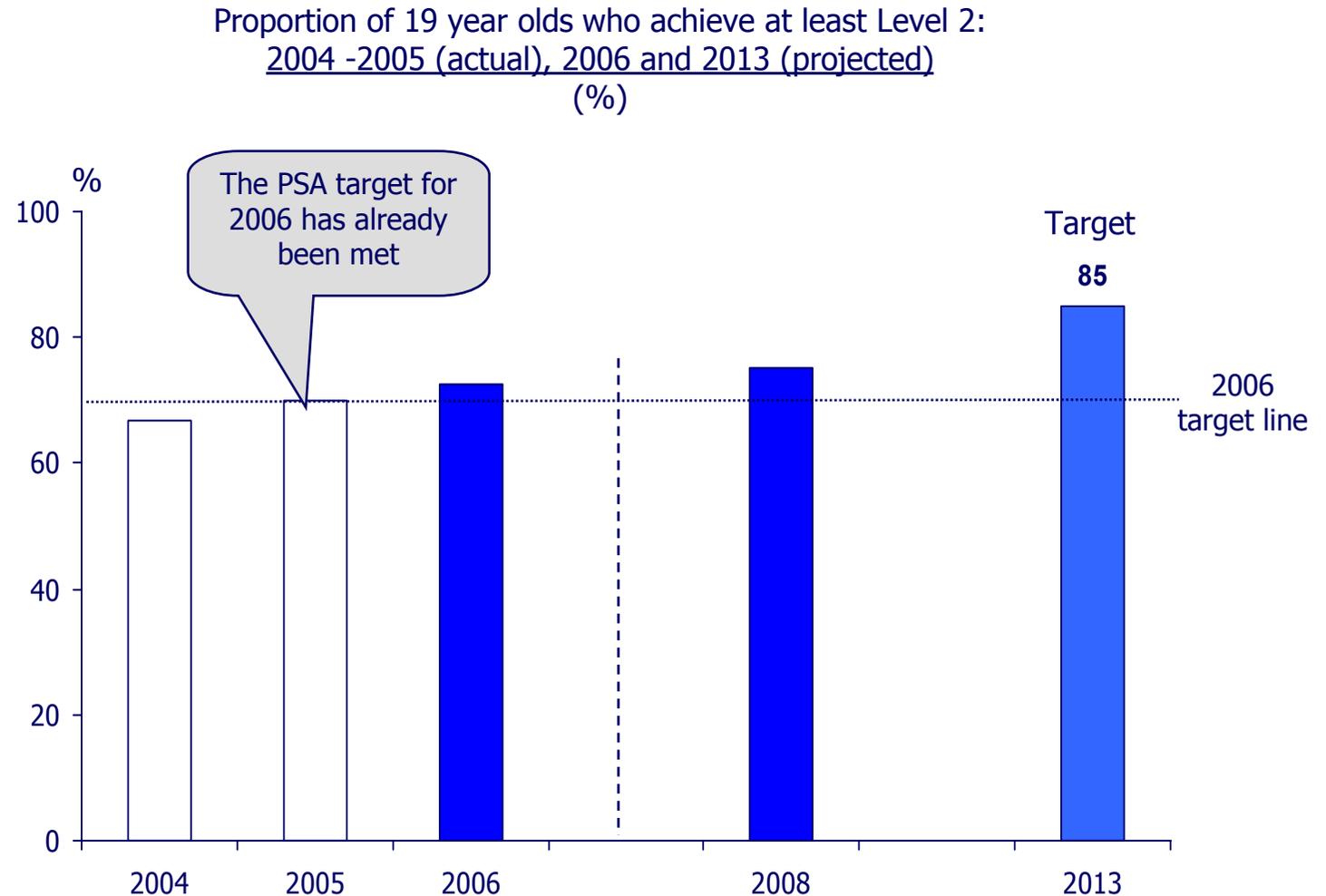
Percentage parents of 5-11 years olds who are very confident in helping their children: 2003



Source: Skills for Life Survey 2003

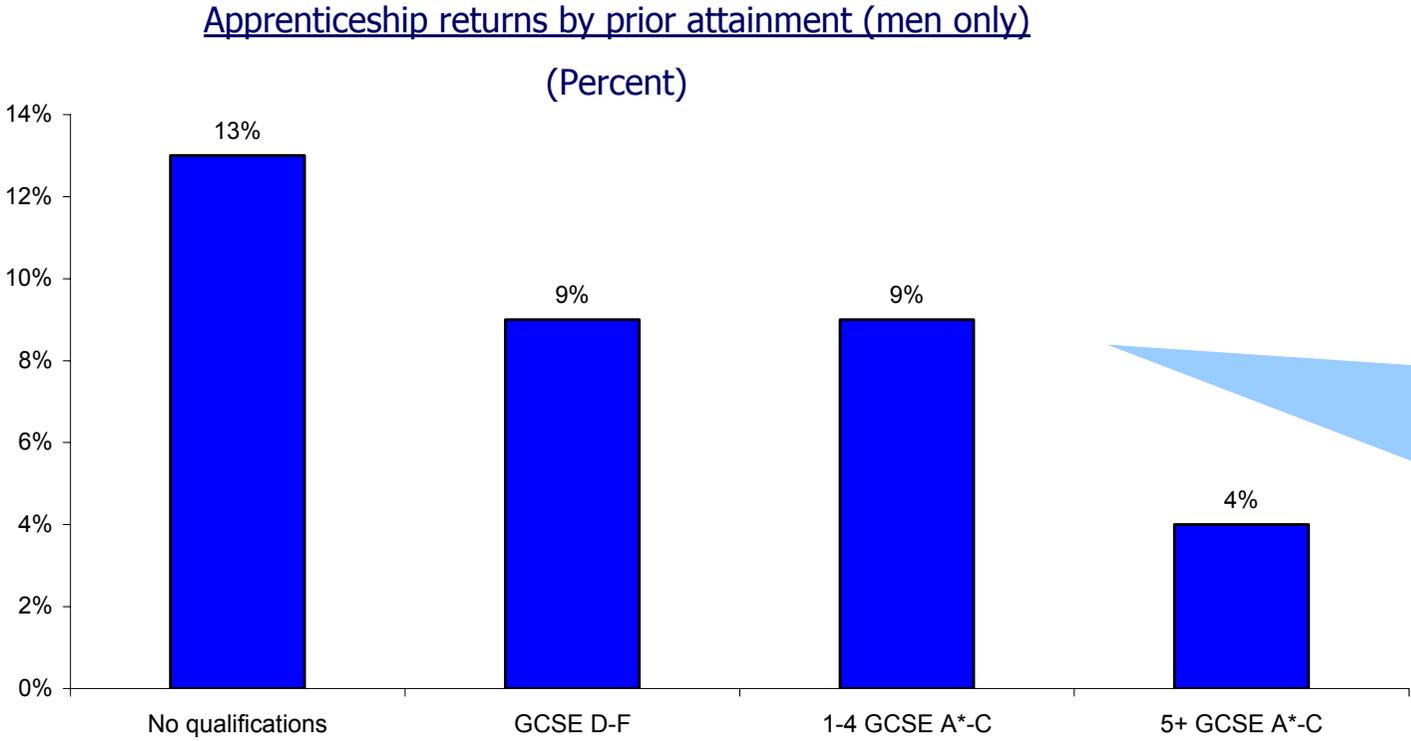
# The proportion of 19 year olds achieving Level 2 is rising, and the 2006 PSA target for this measure has already been met

- The Department has a PSA target to increase the proportion of 19 year olds who achieve at least Level 2 by 3 percentage points between 2004 and 2006, and a further 2 percentage points between 2006 and 2008
- The target for 2006 has already been met and projections suggest that the target for 2008 will also be surpassed



Source: 'Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people in England measured using matched administrative data: attainment by age 19 in 2005 (provisional)', 2006, DfES SFR 06/2006

# The individuals who benefit most from Apprenticeships are generally those with lower prior attainment



If combined with NVQ3+ qualifications these would rise even further e.g. to **21%** for those with no qualifications and to **13%** for those with good GCSEs.

Source: McIntosh, S. (2004) 'The Returns to Apprenticeship Training', CEP Discussion Paper No 622.

# Policies to engage adults are targeted at those with the lowest skills, but increasing take-up of learning is still challenging

---

## L2 entitlement

- Gives every adult in England who has not already gained a full Level 2 qualification the opportunity to receive free tuition for a L2 qualification
- In 2004/5, L2 entitlement trialled in two regions. Results suggest small positive impact on take-up of training – one region reported an increase in L2 training of 10-20%, greater than national increase – but impact limited by late introduction of trial which hindered marketing opportunities. Data on take up in 2005/6, available April 2006, should provide a better picture

## L3 entitlement

- 19-25 year olds will also benefit from new entitlement to free tuition for their first full L3 qualification, with further extensions over time as the new qualification framework is introduced

## Adult Learning Grant

- Means tested grant of up to £30 per week for full-time FE learners studying for first full L2 or L3 qualification. Trialled since 2003/4 and now available in 19 Learning Skills Council areas
- So far 15,000 learners have taken up grant. But only 10% of these said they would not have done course without grant. Success rates for ALG applicants are 10 percentage points higher than eligible non-applicants

## Union Learning

- Over 67,000 workers participated in 2004, particularly targeted in workplaces where training opportunities have been limited in the past
- But 1/3 of projects reported lack of support from employers – “the majority [of employers] are still not convinced of the benefit that learning brings” and securing release from work is still an issue.

Sources: DfES internal ILR analysis for 2004/5 of the L2 entitlement; 'Evaluation of the Union Learning Fund Year 4', (2002), DfES RR378; Further Education White Paper, DfES

## Employer Training Pilots had a positive impact on training levels in first year, but need to focus more on employers who would not otherwise train

---

ETP is being rolled out nationally in the form of 'Train to Gain'. The core 'offer' is free or subsidised training for basic skills or first L2 qualifications where employees receive paid time off to train and employers are compensated

- Employer Training Pilots (ETP) achieved high take-up - some 11,000 employers and nearly 200,000 employees in three years
- Employers and employees reported high satisfaction with the training and a wide range of benefits
- Successful completion of the training and achievement of a qualification is expected to be around 70%
- But in the first year, additionality was limited - evaluation showed only around 10-15% of the employers and the Level 2 qualifications achieved were additional. This suggests a need for increased targeting in the roll-out of the majority of employers who do not already provide time off for low skilled employees to train to qualifications

# Contents

---

PART A: What does 'social mobility' mean for the DFES?

PART B: What is the attainment gap and what is happening to it?

PART C: What are the key drivers of the gap, and what do we know about what might narrow it?

PART D: How might current policies contribute to narrowing the gap?

- Early years ages 0-5
- School ages 5-19
- Ages 19+

**PART E: Challenges and priorities**

## Key conclusions

---

We are seeking to achieve an education system characterised by excellence and equity

The evidence suggests that we need to think hard about accountabilities and incentives in the education system

Key areas include:

- A continued focus on raising attainment for all in the early years
  - A target to increase the number of children at age 5 who achieve a good level of development from 48% to 53% by 2008
- Incentives to encourage progression for all students at all key stages, and possibly a target to this effect
- Ensuring that nearly all students reach Level 2 by age 19
  - A new ambition for 85% of all young people to achieve this by 2013, raising to 90% thereafter

# Other key challenges that emerge from the evidence and analysis

---

## Key messages from the evidence

- In recent years there have been considerable improvements in attainment for all groups of pupils, regardless of family background. There has been some narrowing of the social class attainment gap at KS3 and KS4. The challenge is to continue to raise attainment for all, while also reducing the gap.
- Social factors and an individual's characteristics have the biggest influence on attainment but we know less about how to effectively intervene in these areas. The potential pay-off warrants continued efforts in this area, but the effectiveness of any interventions must be closely monitored
- Educational factors can and do make a difference, although it is important to ensure that both universal and targeted services reach the key groups that are adversely affected by social class attainment gaps
- The Government has a wide range of high-potential policies in place, or in train, but for many it is too early to know the impact they are having on social class attainment gaps

## Key challenges ...

1. Ensuring that educational interventions that have the potential to reduce the gap are designed and implemented so as to reach the groups that they need to; and
2. Exploring further (and testing) interventions that might be effective in impacting on social and family factors and that would have flow-on benefits for narrowing the gap across the education system

# Six priority areas to underpin our approach to narrowing the social class attainment gap (I)

---

## 1. Higher Profile

**Issue:** Too few policies specify narrowing the social class attainment gap as a specific objective.

**Priority:** Increased emphasis on narrowing the gap across the DfES and the wider system to raise the profile of this objective.

## 2. Better Measurement

**Issue:** Current measures of social class attainment gaps are inadequate and prevent clarity of focus.

**Priority:** Agreement on how the gap will be measured and progress assessed.

## 3. Early and sustained high quality interventions

**Issues:** The combination of early social class gaps and the influence of prior attainment over the education lifecycle can corner young people into a vicious cycle of low attainment. Outside prior attainment, there is evidence of social class attainment gaps e.g. children from more deprived backgrounds tend to make less progress at each stage.

**Priority:** Increased emphasis on early interventions that reach all lower income families. Sustained interventions to ensure pupils are provided with a second or third chance if required.

## Six priority areas to underpin our approach to narrowing the social class attainment gap (II)

---

### 4. Personalised Interventions

**Issue:** Evidence suggests that different approaches work for different groups and different individuals. Drivers of attainment gap are a complex mix of individuals' characteristics and social/family factors. Initiatives do not always reach key target groups.

**Priority:** Targeted personalised policies to effectively reach key groups - these can be both educational and non-educational, **but** only if we can be confident that they will make a difference.

### 5. Improved understanding of key groups

**Issue:** Aspirations and expectations are important, for both learners and their parents. Our understanding of how to affect these things is poor.

**Priority:** Increased emphasis and effort to understand the motivations and aspirations of our key groups that we need to reach if we are to reduce social class attainment gaps.

### 6. Sharing Best Practice

**Issues:** Some educational institutions are making more progress in narrowing attainment gaps than others.

**Priority:** Extend our understanding of why some institutions are making more progress, and establish a process to help share this success with other institutions.

## Forthcoming work

---

In June 2006, the DfES will release a National Statistical Bulletin on *Trends in Attainment Gaps in Schools*. This bulletin will contain more detailed statistics that complement and extend some of the work in this set of materials.

The Bulletin will discuss attainment at pupil, school and Local Authority level mainly between differing levels of deprivation although some pupil level analyses are also repeated by ethnicity. Various measures of deprivation are used including pupil level FSM, school level FSM, Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) and Social Class from survey data.

This will be available at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/contents.shtml>.