

YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 November 2015

School Leadership and Governance in Closing the Gap in North Yorkshire

Introduction

North Yorkshire is moving to a school-led improvement system where four Improvement Partnerships (Early Years, Primary, Special and Secondary) have responsibility for improving outcomes and ensuring that all North Yorkshire schools are good or outstanding. A key priority for all Improvement Partnership Boards, given the end of key stage outcomes is to close the gap between vulnerable learners and their peers. The Improvement Partnerships are funded to oversee school to school support and to work with the Teaching School Alliances and other partnerships as key providers. In line with this school-led approach, there are less LA advisers from September 2015.

Whilst the attainment and progress of all children and young people is crucial, the North Yorkshire Closing the Gap Strategy focuses on vulnerable children and young people who, as a group, do not usually make as much progress or attain as well as their peers. In particular, pupils in receipt of the pupil premium are a key focus. These pupils are ones that have had free school meals at any point in the last six years (FSM6), children in care and service family children.

Closing the gap

North Yorkshire's Strategy for Closing the Gap in educational progress and attainment 2015-2018 states that:

"Closing the Gap" - or rather, failing to - is widely seen as an Achilles Heel for the British educational system. For many decades we have been aware that disadvantaged children fare significantly less well than their peers in terms both of absolute educational attainment and of progress while they are at school. The pattern sets in early - children from disadvantaged backgrounds are already well behind their peers in terms of cognitive development. The gap frequently widens through the school system, meaning that overall, nearly six out of ten disadvantaged children do not achieve five A-Cs including English and maths at GCSE, compared with only one in three from more advantaged backgrounds.*

It also states that in the context of this Strategy:

*If North Yorkshire is to be a place where **every** young person thrives, we need to inject fresh rigour and urgency into our efforts to close the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged children and their peers.*

How effective are schools and the Education Service in closing the gap between vulnerable learners and their peers? What is the impact of current initiatives and ways of working?

Context and background to closing the gap in North Yorkshire

Gaps between those eligible for free school meals and others are wider in North Yorkshire than the national average and attainment of disadvantaged pupils is low at all key stages. However, there has been some encouraging progress in the County. For example, KS2 outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in 2014 in North Yorkshire improved more rapidly (6 ppt compared with 4 ppt) than the national average to 60% RWM4+. At the same time, the KS2 gap narrowed more rapidly (by 3 ppt compared with 1 ppt).

2015 results are not yet available and will be provided in due course (schools have predicted further improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils).

North Yorkshire has had a broad range of strategies, projects and training aimed at closing the gap. Often schools and settings have been given financial support.

As well as current intervention projects, the North Yorkshire Closing the Gap Innovation Project was launched to schools in November 2013 supported by funding from the Wrea Head Trust. The project is intended to take place over a period of three years and it is envisaged that some £200k will be released each year to schools to fund the proposed projects. 15 proposals have now been approved in the first two cohorts, involving over 120 primary and secondary schools.

The Council's Strategy for Closing the Gap in Educational Progress and Attainment 2015-2018 states that "However, we have to accept that whilst individual initiatives have been able to demonstrate impact, we have to have a greater impact across the County. We need to move faster and in a more coherent way. With the role and capacity of the LA changing as a result of government policy and funding cuts there will not be the same scope to support schools financially; nor will there be the same range of specialist advisers and other officers available"

Background to the Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium is a government initiative designed to target resources on those pupils deemed to be from a disadvantaged background. Specifically the pupil premium money is provided for those pupils who have been on free school meals any point over the past 6 years or those pupils who have been looked after continuously for at least 6 months.

For the year 2015/2016 the pupil premium is valued at £935 per eligible pupil in secondary education up to the age of 16 and £1320 per eligible pupil in primary education. The government have not dictated how the pupil premium money should be spent, but what is clear is that the money should be used to promote strategies which narrow the gap in attainment between the highest and lowest achieving pupils. Children in the care of local authorities attract funding of £1, 900 which is the responsibility of the LA's Virtual School Headteacher.

There is a separate budget for pupils who are members of service families, the Service Pupil Premium of £300 which is intended to provide pastoral care rather than academic support to help these pupils who often face unique challenges.

Ofsted Guidance for schools

- ✓ Never confuse eligibility for the Pupil Premium with low ability, focus on supporting disadvantaged pupils to achieve the highest levels.
- ✓ Thoroughly analyse which pupils are underachieving, particularly in English and mathematics, and why.
- ✓ Draw on research evidence (such as the Sutton Trust toolkit⁴) and evidence from their own and others' experience to allocate the funding to the activities that are most likely to have an impact on improving achievement.
- ✓ Understand the importance of ensuring that all day-to-day teaching meets the needs of each learner, rather than relying on interventions to compensate for teaching that is less than good.
- ✓ Allocate the best teachers to teach intervention groups to improve mathematics and English, or employ new teachers who have a good track record in raising attainment in those subjects.
- ✓ Use achievement data frequently to check whether interventions or techniques are working and make adjustments accordingly, rather than just using the data retrospectively to see if something had worked.
- ✓ Make sure that support staff, particularly teaching assistants, are highly trained and understand their role in helping pupils to achieve.
- ✓ Systematically focus on giving pupils clear, useful feedback about their work, and ways that they could improve it.
- ✓ Ensure that a designated senior leader has a clear overview of how the funding is being allocated and the difference it is making to the outcomes for pupils.
- ✓ Ensure that class and subject teachers know which pupils are eligible for the Pupil Premium so that they can take responsibility for accelerating their progress.

Findings from Ofsted reports in July 2014

Ofsted's 2014 update on the use of the pupil premium (from Ofsted reports) states:

“Strong governance is critical to schools’ successful use of the pupil premium funding to accelerate progress and narrow gaps in attainment. Effective governors are ambitious for their poorest pupils and hold leaders to account for their decisions and for the impact of initiatives funded by the pupil premium”.

“Inspectors also report that strong governing bodies are fully involved in deciding how pupil premium funding is used. Finances are tightly controlled and decisions on spending are linked closely to priorities in the school improvement plan. They monitor its effectiveness in closing the attainment gap between different groups of pupils. They have a comprehensive knowledge of published data and are skilled in using this to check on the progress of the school and hold staff to account. They also take steps to collect first-hand evidence, for example by meeting with students and teachers”.

The report also states that:

“A common weakness in the schools where gaps in attainment are not closing quickly enough is insufficient analysis of the learning needs of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding. In such schools, even where information about pupils’ progress was available, it was not always used well enough to ensure that funding was appropriately targeted.

In some of the weaker schools, analysis of pupils’ progress had not been shared fully with teachers. Consequently, teachers were unable to plan work that met the needs of pupils.

In the very weakest performing schools, inspection reports identified a worrying lack of focus on pupils eligible for the pupil premium. In these schools, a widespread failure in leadership and governance had normally been identified. Leaders had not prioritised raising the attainment of pupils’ eligible for free school meals and poorly informed or unskilled governors had not held leaders to account.

Furthermore, the most common reason for a review of the school’s use of the pupil premium funding was that gaps were not closing sufficiently well, especially in English and mathematics. The most common criticism in inspection reports was that the impact of spending was not being evaluated effectively by leaders and governors. Other examples of poor leadership and management include not ensuring that the funding is spent on the specific pupils for whom it is intended or having an underspend”.

North Yorkshire context

In 2015, there were 11,000 pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium in North Yorkshire; 7,000 in primary schools and 4,000 in secondary schools. There are over 1000 children in Year 6 and over 1000 students in Year 11 eligible for the pupil premium in schools across the LA. All secondary schools and the very vast majority of primary schools in the County receive some funding for such pupils, although the extent of this varies significantly – for instance, some secondary schools have fewer than 5% FSM6 pupils whilst some have more than 50%.

Many smaller primary schools do not have any FSM6 pupils in most of their year groups. Others can have just one pupil.

North Yorkshire has a lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils than England as a whole: for example, in secondary schools 18% of students are FSM6 in comparison with an England average of 27%.

The distribution of the pupil premium cohort varies across the County, reflecting the varied geographical pattern of wider disadvantage. For example, schools on the coast have a high proportion of FSM6 pupils, whilst most schools in more affluent areas of the county such as Harrogate tend to have relatively few. Some towns in North Yorkshire such as Selby have geographical clusters of schools with a high proportion.

Approach

The Committee is asked to scrutinise the impact of the work currently being undertaken with school leaders and governors in closing the gap and the progress of the ten priorities described in the Closing the Gap Strategy.

The Committee will consider evidence from schools that have been successful in closing the gap and who can demonstrate the most effective practice.

The timetable for the witness sessions at the meeting on 13 November 2015 is as follows:

1035 - Presentation on North Yorkshire data from the 2015 outcomes

This will include national and other comparisons including regional, coastal, shire and statistical neighbours. This will also include an update on the progress of the ten immediate priorities from the Strategy and an update on the progress of the Early Years Strategy.

1050 – Chair of Governors

The Chair of Governors from Selby Community Primary School and Ripon Cathedral Church of England Primary School will attend the meeting.

The initial questions that the Chair of Governors have been asked to answer are:

1. How does your school decide which approaches and programmes to adopt to improve pupil learning?
2. Whose advice do you follow to make that decision – i.e. it is good practise from other school, the local authority, your own research or own sources?
3. What are the actions that have had the greatest impact on outcomes for vulnerable pupils and, in particular, those eligible for Pupil Premium?
4. Which initiatives haven't worked so well?
5. Tell us about how you use resources in your school to drive improvements in closing the gap?
6. How do you challenge your head teacher to meet closing the gap targets and how resources are best used?
7. Tell us about how your school tracks and monitors pupil attainment and progress to check whether gaps are being closed and whether any interventions are working?
8. What are the messages that the school gives about its aspirations for all pupils and how are these communicated?
9. What would you expect from the Improvement Partnerships, Teaching School Alliances and /or the Council in order to progress your work most effectively and at a pace?
10. Tell us about the challenges within your particular geographical area?

1130 – Head Teachers

The head teachers from Sleights Primary School, Broomfield Primary School, Northallerton and St. Aidan's Church of England High School, Harrogate will attend the meeting.

The initial questions that the head teachers have been asked to answer are:

1. How do you establish what is likely to have the greatest impact for each pupil in accelerating progress to close the gaps?
2. How does your school challenge/support/enrich the offer to ensure the more able disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress?
3. How do you ensure that teachers' expectations of vulnerable children and young people are high?
4. How do your governors evaluate the impact of your closing the gap strategies?

5. Tell us about your use of data to identify underperforming pupils and how do you compare the performance of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium with other eligible pupils nationally or with all pupils?
6. Do you have a number of transient pupils and how do you ensure their educational progress?
7. Tell us about the challenges within your particular geographical area?
8. What would you expect from the Improvement Partnerships, Teaching School Alliances and /or the Council in order to progress your work most effectively and at a pace?
9. How do you deal with the transition for those children entering secondary school from primary school?
10. What are the barriers for vulnerable children and young people and how do you work with parents and other partners to remove them?

The head teachers from Western Primary School, Harrogate, Follifoot and Spofforth CE Primary Schools and Upper Wharfedale School are unable to attend the meeting but have supplied written responses to the questions. These responses are at **Appendix "A"**.

1210 – Teaching School Alliances representatives

Representatives from the Scarborough Teaching Alliance and the Northern Lights Teaching School Alliance will attend the meeting.

The initial questions that the teaching school alliances have been asked to answer are:

1. How many schools are in your alliance and what area does it cover?
2. What is the purpose of your alliance?
3. How do you, in your role as an Alliance help to close the gap for vulnerable pupils both in your own Alliance and in a wider context?
4. How do you know your work is having a positive impact on outcomes?
5. What successful strategies have you seen in your Alliance?
6. How will your role fit into the Improvement Partnerships that have been set up?
7. What are the challenges in your particular geographical area?

1250 – Lunch

1320 – York University and Joseph Rowntree Foundation

A representative from York University will attend the meeting.

The initial questions that the University and the Foundation have been asked to answer are:

1. What does your research tell you about best practice in closing the gap?
2. JRF research in 2010 pointed towards a potentially key role for differences in how children and parents feel about themselves and their prospects – is this still the view and how can this be best addressed?
3. What is your understanding of the challenges to closing the gap in North Yorkshire?
4. How realistic are the targets set out in the Council's Strategy for Closing the Gap in Educational Progress and Attainment 2015-2018?
5. What key points should the local authority consider in making a move to a school led improvement system successful?
6. What effect would a move to more academies and free schools have?

The representative from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation is unable to attend the meeting but has supplied written responses to the questions. These responses are at **Appendix "B"**.

1350 – North Yorkshire County Council Children and Young People's Service

A representative from the North Yorkshire County Council Education Service will attend the meeting.

The initial questions that the Education Service has been asked to answer are:

1. How do you ensure that the Council's vision on closing the gap is communicated to schools and "bought into"?
2. How will the Improvement Partnerships support school-to-school improvement for Governors and Head teachers?
3. How does the Council support governing bodies to be able to provide high quality challenge and support to school leaders?
4. How do you ensure that the support is focused at the right places so that is effective and proactive?
5. How do you hold schools to account for the progress of vulnerable learners?
6. How do you measure the impact of the closing the gap initiatives. Are there too many and should there be a stronger focus on fewer initiatives?
7. How are the ten immediate priorities described in the Strategy progressing and how are you monitoring impact?
8. Given that the Early Years Closing the Gap Strategy is advanced in its implementation, what has been the impact?

1430 – Conclusions

This will be an opportunity for the committee to consider all the evidence they have heard and seen and to make recommendations, where appropriate, on improvements the council could take to help leaders at school take effective and swift action on closing the gap in educational attainment.

Key Evidence

The Committee is requested to consider the following documents (which are appended to this report) as part of its evidence gathering to enable it to reach its recommendations.

Appendix:

- A. Written responses from head teachers
- B. Written response from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- C. North Yorkshire County Council - Our Strategy for Closing the Gap in Educational Progress and Attainment 2015-2018
- D. Children's Services Peer Challenge: North Yorkshire June 2015
- E. The Pupil Premium Next Steps - Sutton Trust and Education Endowment Foundation July 2015

Background papers: None

5 November 2015

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Western Primary School, Harrogate

Head Teachers

1. How do you establish what is likely to have the greatest impact for each pupil in accelerating progress to close the gaps?
The use of a range of assessment informs this process ~
Analysis of formal test results including question level analysis
Teacher observation of the children's work in books and in the classroom
Marking and the children's response
Questioning children
Parental involvement
In some cases, outside agencies
Close liaison with the all adults working with the child which is co-ordinated by the SENCo
Training of staff to deal with specific needs
Monitoring outcomes and tailoring individual learning programmes to suit
2. How does your school challenge/support/enrich the offer to ensure the more able disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress?
Funding is provided for children in receipt of pupil premium for trips and visits if necessary.
Extra-curricular activities are signposted to support individual needs.
Parental support in terms of workshops, drop in sessions, toddler group.
These children were positively encouraged to attend booster groups and practice sessions.
Pupil progress meetings were used to track individuals and ensure challenge.
A range of resources are routinely assigned to meet the needs of these pupils in order to close the gap.
3. How do you ensure that teachers' expectations of vulnerable children and young people are high?
Staff training
School's ethos
Pupil progress meetings to hold staff to account
Year group and staff meetings to moderate work across groups
SEN and Inclusion team support
Appraisal targets
Presentations to governors by each team leader
4. How do your governors evaluate the impact of your closing the gap strategies?
Each team leader produces a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the data for their year group at the end of each term. This is presented to governors and they are able to answer challenging questions.
Governors undertake themed 'walk rounds' of the school such as provision SEN and Inclusion.
Governors have undertaken training in data analysis.

5. Tell us about your use of data to identify underperforming pupils and how do you compare the performance of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium with other eligible pupils nationally or with all pupils?

The school tracking system identifies children making slow progress and those at risk of under achievement.

These pupils are discussed in pupil progress meetings and appropriate interventions put in place. This may require a redeployment of resources as necessary.

As part of the termly analysis of data, group leaders compare progress and attainment of pupil premium children with the rest of the cohort.

Close tracking of vulnerable children takes place on an individual basis.

6. Do you have a number of transient pupils and how do you ensure their educational progress?

N/A in this context at Western.

7. Tell us about the challenges within your particular geographical area?

The smaller numbers of pupil premium children in each year group make data validity and meaningful input harder.

8. What would you expect from the Improvement Partnerships, Teaching School Alliances and /or the Council in order to progress your work most effectively and at a pace?

As a large school, we need to be able to react quickly and so have our own team in place. Cluster work to challenge our practice and keep up to date is what we would expect.

9. How do you deal with the transition for those children entering secondary school from primary school?

Transition meetings with the secondary school.

Information and records are passed on.

Individuals are given separate transition programmes as necessary.

10. What are the barriers for vulnerable children and young people and how do you work with parents and other partners to remove them?

Each child in a school like ours has very individual needs. It is very difficult to group children together because of this. We employ a parent support worker and Quiet Room co-ordinator to help liaise with parents.

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The key lines of enquiry for the representatives

Answers from Paul Griffiths Head teacher – Federation of Follifoot & Spofforth CE Primary Schools.

Head Teachers

1. How do you establish what is likely to have the greatest impact for each pupil in accelerating progress to close the gaps?

Learn from previous practice within and beyond our own school, looking at what has had impact previously. Compare and contrast current needs with the needs where impact has been achieved previously. Discuss with key staff, pupil and parents best probably strategies. Consider information available nationally with regard to closing the gap.

2. How does your school challenge/support/enrich the offer to ensure the more able disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress?

All disadvantaged pupils have personalised plan document which focuses attention on all aspects of provision for individual pupil. The starting focus of this is personalisation of quality first teaching and what individuals need to ensure they make expected or better than expected progress. After that consideration would be given to how provision within and beyond school can be enriched to ensure outcomes (in the broadest sense not just academic) are excellent. At present with the shift in focus towards mastery and greater focus on the depth of understanding within year group expectations accelerated progress for more able is an interesting group. Essentially accelerated progress cannot and should not be measured in the same way as progression through levels as quickly as possible (which was previously a measure of success) is no longer applicable. Our understanding of current expectation is that the focus for more able should be on mastery and depth of understanding including application not accelerating on to the next 'level' or 'aspect'.

3. How do you ensure that teachers' expectations of vulnerable children and young people are high?

An established school culture of high expectations for all. Ethos that promotes growth mind-set culture and a culture that challenges the myth of 'talent' (see work of Matthew Syed). School has and promotes an ethos and belief that through high quality teaching and learning, purposeful practice and high quality feedback overtime anyone can become confident, fluent and master any aspect, subject or area of learning.

4. How do your governors evaluate the impact of your closing the gap strategies?
 Through HT reports including data of impact. Through governor visits to see strategies in action. Through talking to staff who have implemented strategies. Through talking to pupils involved in strategies.
5. Tell us about your use of data to identify underperforming pupils and how do you compare the performance of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium with other eligible pupils nationally or with all pupils?
Electronic tracking systems that allows HT and subject leaders to quickly and easily identify pupils who are below age related and or pupils not making expected progress. PP pupils are compared with their school based cohort and also national figures (via RAISE) – note – comparisons with national have to be given careful consideration as cohort sizes at the schools range from (2-24)
6. Do you have a number of transient pupils and how do you ensure their educational progress?
This is not a significant issue for us.
7. Tell us about the challenges within your particular geographical area?
These are not necessarily geographic but are challenges of our schools. External perception that as a school 'we have it easy' very little deprivation (actual figures 19/109 PP pupils with some incredibly complex cases). Professional isolation of small schools – don't have wider expertise of a larger staff. Limited resources of smaller school - apart from HT there is very little dedicated leadership for other leaders e.g. SENCO, Lit, Maths leaders – means much of the work around implementing, monitoring and evaluating provision for vulnerable learners is done at end of day. Perception from parents that 'small' schools are best setting for high needs pupils (often because of perception of small classes) sometimes means small schools have a number of vulnerable disadvantaged high need pupils but without the same capacity of larger school. The impact of high need pupils in a school of 50 is very different to within a school of 250.
8. What would you expect from the Improvement Partnerships, Teaching School Alliances and /or the Council in order to progress your work most effectively and at a pace?
Examples of practice that impacts. Leading projects across groups of schools. Helping schools with similar challenges to link up – facilitate and support the development of these links. Create a 'directory' of best practice with case studies and contacts.
9. How do you deal with the transition for those children entering secondary school from primary school?

NA as we are primary schools

10. What are the barriers for vulnerable children and young people and how do you work with parents and other partners to remove them?

Support and encouragement with learning beyond school. Practical space and resources to facilitate learning beyond school. Use parent guides and sessions to show how parents can help learning. Regular contact each term with all parents. Extended meetings via learning conversations. Additional tuition after school and holidays. Equipment loan ranging from text books, basic English and maths equipment through to I-pad loans.

Parents who find it hard to engage as a result of negative experience of school (when they were pupils. Personalised approach – learning conversations. Effective joint working with other agencies family outreach workers, health visitors.

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School Leadership and Governance in Closing the Gap in North Yorkshire

Upper Wharfedale School

Head Teachers

1. How do you establish what is likely to have the greatest impact for each pupil in accelerating progress to close the gaps?
 - a. We examine the cohort and key whole school issues we need to address before forming our spending plan for Pupil Premium. For example, a particular group for us is those entering on level 4c. We have also identified lower aspirations for disadvantaged students so have invested in increased advice and guidance for post 16 options.
There has been some local and national research on strategies which have been proven to have most (and least) impact so we have taken note of this
2. How does your school challenge/support/enrich the offer to ensure the more able disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress?
 - a. It is essential that any success criteria attached to plans are progress, rather than attainment driven. Using simply an A*-C criteria risks the more able underachieving. We do not lower expectations for any “group” of students in terms of progress, whether disadvantaged, SEN or more able
3. How do you ensure that teachers’ expectations of vulnerable children and young people are high?
 - a. Please see above – all outcomes must be progress driven. The extra focus and accountability of the Pupil Premium funding adds weight to this, even though we do allow others to benefit from it. If there is little or no impact, the activity or resource is not continued the following year
4. How do your governors evaluate the impact of your closing the gap strategies?
 - a. Standing agenda item on all T&L committee meetings. Associate Head presents progress indicators. Questions recorded in minutes
5. Tell us about your use of data to identify underperforming pupils and how do you compare the performance of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium with other eligible pupils nationally or with all pupils?
 - a. We use the same data for all pupils and do not have any different expectations for those eligible for Pupil Premium. We use KS2 data and CAT testing in Year 7 to identify ability, and half-termly tracking from teachers to identify underperformance. Targets are set based on 4 levels of progress

between KS2 and 4, regardless of PP eligibility. We used to use FFT but there is a danger that PP students have lower expectations using this

6. Do you have a number of transient pupils and how do you ensure their educational progress?
 - a. Very few. We still aim for 4 levels for the same reason as above. It is often difficult to achieve due to absence, but we are not affected by this as much as some

7. Tell us about the challenges within your particular geographical area?
 - a. Rurality/sparsity and size of school. This means that each student is “worth” almost 2% which is significant for performance measures. See below re staffing

8. What would you expect from the Improvement Partnerships, Teaching School Alliances and /or the Council in order to progress your work most effectively and at a pace?
 - a. The main aspect is capacity in terms of staffing. With many single-person departments, we need support brokered from larger schools to enable sharing and modelling good practice. This obviously comes at a cost – not necessarily to our school, but to enable others to release staff. A lot of trust and sharing of data is essential and requires a change of mindset for some!

9. How do you deal with the transition for those children entering secondary school from primary school?
 - a. This is one of our biggest strengths. As a recently formed federation with a local primary school, we have further strengthened our understanding of KS2 teaching and transition. We run workshops in the summer term for pupils and parents, and being so small enables all pupils to be known, usually by name, before they start. We have employed a primary specialist for our most vulnerable, directly funded by Year 7 Catch Up Premium. The change of assessment procedures (i.e. the removal of national curriculum levels) will make this very challenging in terms of continuity and early identification of those in need, without a clear understanding of the primary methods of assessment

10. What are the barriers for vulnerable children and young people and how do you work with parents and other partners to remove them?
 - a. I believe the answer is in the question, to an extent! The biggest barrier often comes from home, with either low aspirations or unrealistic expectations. We have close relationships with the majority of our parents (again, helped by our size) and work hard to overcome these, with general success. Sometimes parents are keen for a “label” of SEN as an excuse/barrier rather than working in the child’s best interests.

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Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Questions:

1. What does your research tell you about best practice in closing the gap?
2. JRF research in 2010 pointed towards a potentially key role for differences in how children and parents feel about themselves and their prospects – is this still the view and how can this be best addressed?
3. What is your understanding of the challenges to closing the gap in North Yorkshire?
4. How realistic are the targets set out in the Council's Strategy for Closing the Gap in Educational Progress and Attainment 2015-2018?
5. What key points should the local authority consider in making a move to a school led improvement system successful?
6. What effect would a move to more academies and free schools have?

The Foundation has commented:

Following our 2010 work we commissioned two further studies to examine the potential for interventions around attitudes and aspirations to be used to raise attainment for children from low income backgrounds. The summary of those findings is at Appendix "1".

We also funded a short paper aimed at schools in England drawing out some key lessons at Appendix "2".

Following that, the Nuffield Foundation funded some further work on parental involvement interventions (parental involvement was the only type of intervention in that area which our research found reasonable evidence to support) which has cast further doubt on whether we have very good interventions to put into practice on this (Appendix "3").

It is also worth highlighting recent reports from the Early Intervention Foundation (with the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission) focusing on social and emotional skills and identifying which of them are significant for later success in life, and what interventions have a good evidence base (Appendix "4").

On the broader questions of what schools should be doing, our reading of the evidence is that the four most important factors are:

- **Data:** know the pupil data, track it carefully, use it to target teaching and learning and supporting interventions.
- **Leadership:** a SMT who are all wholly committed to raising the attainment of children from low income backgrounds, have high expectations and ensure that all staff buy into these (including support staff) is a vital pre-condition.
- **Using evidence and robustly evaluating practice:** stopping things that aren't working, trying out things that already have a good evidence base rather than looking for innovation.
- **High quality teaching:** the biggest factor that supports high attainment for low income pupils is high quality teaching, and there is greater variation within schools than between them. Recruiting high quality teachers and leaders and getting the best teachers in front of children from low income backgrounds is crucial.

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Joseph Rowntree Foundation - Appendix "1".

The role of aspirations, attitudes and behaviour in closing the educational attainment gap

Which interventions have actually improved educational outcomes?

Evidence supports interventions focused on parental involvement in children's education to improve outcomes, rolling out and closely monitoring these.

There is strong interest in aspirations because it is assumed that raising them will increase educational achievement, as well as contribute to greater equity and the UK's economic competitiveness. Low aspirations among young people and their families in disadvantaged areas are often thought to explain their poor education levels and jobs.

This Roundup asks if children's and parents' attitudes, aspirations and behaviours (AABs) for education really do affect attainment; and whether interventions focused on these can reduce the attainment gap. Summarising key messages from research in JRF's Education and Poverty programme, it found that:

- It was not possible to establish a clear causal relationship between AABs and children's educational outcomes, particularly due to the quality of evidence, which offers limited support for the impact of most interventions.
- Evidence supports interventions focused on parental involvement in children's education to improve outcomes. The immediate focus should be on rolling out and closely monitoring these.
- There is mixed evidence on the impact of interventions focused on extra-curricular activities, mentoring, children's self-belief and motivation. Further development of such interventions should be trialled alongside evaluations of effectiveness.
- There is little evidence of impact for interventions focused on things like addressing children's general attitudes to education or the amount of paid work children do during term time.

The full report is available at <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/role-aspirations-attitudes-and-behaviour-closing-educational-attainment-gap>

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Joseph Rowntree Foundation - Appendix "2".

Educational aspirations: How English schools can work with parents to keep them on track

Key points:

- Disadvantaged pupils often have high aspirations. However, they may not know *how* to achieve them and may struggle to maintain them.
- Disadvantaged parents and their social networks can lack the experience and knowledge to help their children. Engaging parents to help them understand what their children's aspirations involve and what will help achieve them is an effective way of raising attainment. Engagement is most effective when:
 - It is collaborative, builds strong relationships and focuses on learning.
 - Schools meet parents on their own terms by tapping into their needs and interests, creating environments that feel comfortable to them and involving other members of their community.
- Where other interventions are used, they should focus on keeping pupils' aspirations on track rather than just 'inspiring' them. Such strategies might include:
 - High-quality careers advice, work experience and work-related learning.
 - Skilled, learning-focused mentoring.

The full report is at: - <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/educational-aspirations-how-english-schools-can-work-parents-keep-them-track>

**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 November
2015**

School Leadership and Governance in Closing the Gap in North Yorkshire

Joseph Rowntree Foundation - Appendix "3".

Developing the most promising parental involvement interventions

Key findings:

- There is no good-quality evidence that parental involvement interventions result in improved educational outcomes, in most age groups and for most approaches.
- The 68 studies present a mixed and far from encouraging picture for the success of parental involvement interventions. Of the seven studies rated medium quality, four evaluated the same two interventions and suggested positive effects on attainment. One study concluded the programme in question had no effect on attainment, and two evaluations found that the relevant parental involvement programmes may have had a negative effect on the children's attainment.
- The most promising phase for parental intervention is pre-school and preparation for primary school.
- Some specific kinds of intervention have so little evidence of promise that they can be abandoned safely (if the concern is chiefly with academic outcomes).

The full report is at: - <http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/developing-most-promising-parental-involvement-interventions>.

**YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 November
2015**

School Leadership and Governance in Closing the Gap in North Yorkshire

Joseph Rowntree Foundation - Appendix "4".

1. Social and emotional skills in childhood and their long-term effects on adult life.

The key findings of the literature review component of the report indicate that:

- Of all of the five social and emotional skills groups considered, **self-control** and **self-regulation** matters most consistently for adult outcomes.

For example, better self-regulation is strongly associated with mental well-being; good physical health and health behaviours; and socio-economic and labour market outcomes.

- **Self-perceptions** and **self-awareness**, such as self-esteem and the belief that one's own actions can make a difference are also found to be important for many adult outcomes.

For example, self-esteem and the belief that one's own actions can make a difference matter for mental well-being; good physical health and health behaviours; and socio-economic and labour market outcomes.

- **Social** skills, related to peer relationships, sociability and social functioning in childhood, also matter.

For example, social skills are important for mental well-being and having a family.

- In general there is a relative lack of evidence on the long-term importance of **motivation** and **resilience**. Whether this means these skills are unimportant for adult outcomes, or that these skills are just under-researched, is unclear.
- The evidence also suggests the importance of **emotional well-being** in childhood. Emotional health in childhood matters for mental well-being as an adult.

New analysis in the report of data from the 1970 Cohort Study finds that social and emotional and cognitive skills are each very important for future life. Their

development is related. Children with strong cognitive skills typically show stronger social and emotional development, and vice-versa. However, social and emotional measures provide important signals about likely outcomes above and beyond what is picked up by measures of literacy and numeracy. Compared with cognitive ability assessed at the same age (10 years), social and emotional skills:

- **matter more** for general mental well-being (such as greater life satisfaction, mental health and well-being);
- **matter similarly** for health and health related outcomes (such as lower likelihood of obesity, smoking and drinking, and better self-rated health);
- **matter similarly** for some socio-economic and labour market outcomes (such as higher income and wealth, being employed, and not being in social housing);
- **matter less** for other socio-economic and labour market outcomes such as obtaining a degree, having higher wages and being employed in a top job (although there is nonetheless a relationship to these outcomes).

2. What works in enhancing social and emotional skills development during childhood and adolescence? A review of the evidence on the effectiveness of school-based and out-of-school programmes in the UK.

The review found strong and consistent support for the impact of social and emotional skills programmes implemented in the school setting. Well-evaluated programmes in primary and secondary schools which sought to improve the skills of all students, including self-esteem, social skills, problem solving and coping skills, led to benefits for students' social and emotional competencies and educational outcomes. More targeted programmes for students at higher risk of developing problems were also found to be effective, as were examples of programmes focused on the prevention of violence and substance misuse through the development of social and emotional skills. Programmes that adopted a whole school approach, i.e. involving staff, parents and the wider community as well as what was taught in the classroom, were found to be effective especially in relation to preventing bullying in schools.

The evidence for programmes delivered in out-of-school youth settings is less definitive. There is evidence from international reviews that these programmes can benefit young people's social and emotional development. There is also some promising evidence from programmes developed in the UK of the benefits of these programmes for youth including those who are at risk or socially excluded. However the evidence currently available on the programmes in the UK is, on the whole, not

yet of sufficient quality to demonstrate impact. The effectiveness of newly developed programmes needs to be evaluated rigorously before they are rolled out more widely.

3. A deep dive into social and emotional learning. What do the views of those involved tell us about the challenges for policy-makers?

Eight key challenges for policy and practice were identified:

1. Social and emotional skills were described as being a group, defined in different ways, but seen to be interdependent and interlinked. Effective provision (resulting in 'well-rounded' people) was reported as needing to deliver the whole group of skills, not just a focus on one or two characteristics.

2. Currently, social and emotional learning provision is hugely variable in the youth and education sectors, meaning that some children and young people receive it and some do not. It was seen as provision that should be available to all, particularly given that children and young people in disadvantaged situations were reported to gain more from social and emotional learning provision than those with opportunities to develop social and emotional skills at home.

3. Evaluating the impact of social and emotional learning is important and challenging. At the moment, this is not being done systematically or widely. Therefore, children and young people are not necessarily receiving the best provision possible. Improving this evidence base in a way that addresses the challenges in measurement was seen as important.

4. The skills and training of staff supporting social and emotional learning with children and young people was described as key in order to ensure quality provision. This was both in terms of specific curriculum delivery in education, such as PSHE, as well as the skill set required for working with young people, such as build trusting relationships in the youth sector. New teachers were described as sometimes underprepared in this area which led to suggestions to include child psychology and social and emotional learning in both initial teacher training (ITT) and continuing professional development (CPD).

5. Recognising the achievements children and young people make in social and emotional learning was described as being really important. The process of reflecting on their progress was described as helping to develop social and emotional learning. A nationally recognised award or certificate would be of tangible benefit to young people in their onward journeys into further education or employment.

6. In the education sector, having a 'whole school approach' to social and emotional skills (SES) delivery was described as the most effective approach alongside dedicated curriculum provision, such as PSHE. Such an approach required strong leadership and for SES to be embedded, modelled and reinforced throughout the school.

7. The key operational drivers in the education sector were reported to be attainment targets and the Ofsted accountability framework, which were not felt to support prioritisation of social and emotional learning or consistency in its provision. The voice of children and young people in contributing to the role of social and emotional learning in education was noted to be absent. Policy leadership was seen as necessary if social and emotional learning is to be prioritised.

8. The youth sector was reported to be fast changing. In Local Authority provision emphasis had shifted from open access to targeted provision. This was described as likely to impact on children and young people currently just under the threshold of targeted intervention. Provision in the third sector was seen as growing, especially around social action.

The full reports are at: - <http://www.eif.org.uk/social-and-emotional-learning/>

North Yorkshire County Council

Our Strategy for Closing the Gap in Educational Progress and Attainment

2015-2018

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1. Foreword

Educational outcomes in North Yorkshire are some of the best in the Country, and we are rightly proud of that. But this isn't true for all of our children. In common with many other local authorities, particularly rural ones, the progress made by our most deprived young people does not match that of their peers. In fact, if anything, the gap in attainment is growing wider, and in this one area alone, North Yorkshire is amongst the worst performing authorities in England. This is a matter of deep concern to politicians, Headteachers, and to all of our professional colleagues.

The reason this issue matters is not to do with league tables. It matters because we are talking about the life chances of some of the most vulnerable young people we support. As professionals, we are driven by a passion to help them to fulfil their fullest potential without preconceptions as to what that might entail. This is part of our collective moral purpose. Although there is excellent practice in some of our schools, we have to accept that overall, we are not yet doing enough, with sufficient impact.

So how do we move forward? Our new Children and Young People's Plan, *Young and Yorkshire*, highlights the ways in which high quality education transforms lives, and it sets out three strategic priorities for the County. "Closing the Gap" is a crucial supporting outcome for all three, whether we are talking about overall educational attainment, the achievement of Looked After Children, or related outcomes in health and emotional wellbeing.

This strategy document examines in more detail how we can make rapid progress in this area. It describes the national and local context. It takes account of the difficult financial environment, and the changing educational landscape, particularly the introduction of Improvement Partnerships. It sets out the immediate priorities for the next three years. It also suggests some challenging targets - accepting, of course, that this is not an issue which is susceptible to a single solution or a quick fix.

Action is needed by all of us, and all of our partners. That said, we recognise that it is within schools and settings that we are most likely to see the transformational changes that are needed. As ever, we will be counting on the dedication and professionalism of our teachers and practitioners to achieve our goals.

I hope that this strategy will command widespread support, and that it will act as a spur for us all to redouble our efforts. If the majority of London Boroughs can transform their performance in this area, as they have done over the last decade, so can we. "Closing the Gap" should be a matter of professional pride for us all.

Pete Dwyer
Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service

2. North Yorkshire's *Closing the Gap* Strategy in a page

Our Vision

From *Young and Yorkshire*: “We want North Yorkshire to be a special place where every childhood is wonderful and every young person thrives.”

To which we add, in the context of this Strategy:

“If North Yorkshire is to be a place where **every** young person thrives, we need to inject fresh rigour and urgency into our efforts to close the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged children and their peers.”

The **ten principles** we will adopt across the Children’s Trust:

1. We will put **high quality teaching and learning** at the heart of this strategy;
2. We will adopt a **broad definition** of “disadvantage;
3. We will keep uppermost in our minds the fact that this issue is about **individual children and young people**, not homogenous groups;
4. We will adopt a **holistic approach** to Closing the Gap;
5. Our interventions will be based on robust and transparent **data about performance and evidence about what works**;
6. We will subscribe to the principles of **early intervention**;
7. We will focus on high quality **transitions**;
8. We will **challenge** wherever necessary; with vigour and honesty;
9. We will **support** wherever necessary, building relationships of mutual trust and respect;
10. We will use our collective influence to ensure that **resources**, both national and local, are directed towards Closing the Gap, including the Pupil Premium and any locally-available discretionary funding.

The **ten immediate priorities**:

- A. Reinvigorate the **Closing the Gap Steering Group** with representatives from all phases
- B. Ensure that closing the gap is a key priority for the **Improvement Partnerships**;
- C. **Define clearly the roles** of the various parties in moving forward;
- D. **Audit all current performance and practice** so as to identify rapidly:
 - i. Particular areas of concern or outlying performance;
 - ii. Local interventions that are proving successful and can be scaled up;
 - iii. Activities that should be stopped;
 - iv. Appropriate schools for Cohort 3 of the *Closing the Gap Innovation Project*.
- E. Set **challenging targets** at all levels;
- F. Ensure that **national and local resources** are allocated to addressing this issue;
- G. Focus on our strategies around particular areas i.e. the **coast**;
- H. Develop discrete and ambitious priorities and targets for the **Early Years**
- I. Encourage all schools and settings, if they have not already done so, to identify **a senior manager, and a Governor**, with specific responsibility for this agenda.
- J. Set out a clear set of expectations for schools and settings

“We will **challenge** wherever necessary – challenge individual children and young people to move beyond any self-imposed limitations; challenge ourselves as professionals to ensure we are not unconsciously limiting children’s aspirations; and challenge schools, Improvement Partnerships, and all parties to the North Yorkshire Children’s Trust to address this issue with vigour and honesty.”

3. Why this matters: the National context

1. "Closing the Gap" - or rather, failing to - is widely seen as an Achilles Heel for the British educational system. For many decades we have been aware that disadvantaged children fare significantly less well than their peers in terms both of absolute educational attainment and of progress while they are at school. The pattern sets in early - children from disadvantaged backgrounds are already well behind their peers in terms of cognitive development. The gap frequently widens through the school system, meaning that overall, nearly six out of ten disadvantaged children do not achieve five A*-Cs including English and maths at GCSE, compared with only one in three from more advantaged backgrounds.

National data suggests that gaps in cognitive development between better off and disadvantaged children open up before the age of three and get wider as children progress through school:

- *By the time children start school there is a 19 month development gap between the richest and the poorest pupils;*
- *Those from the poorest fifth of families are on average more than eleven months behind children from middle income families in vocabulary tests when they start school at five.*
- *Disadvantaged children are 20 per cent less likely to achieve Level Four in reading writing and maths in Key Stage Two tests at age 11 compared to other children.*
- *They are 37 per cent less likely to achieve five good GCSEs including English and maths.*

2. Such gaps in attainment lead to serious life consequences. Without a basic set of qualifications, young people are far less likely to go to University, to get a decent job, or to enjoy good physical and mental health. The pattern of disadvantage is likely to be passed onto their own children, seriously damaging social mobility. This has huge consequences for the economic and cultural life of the country.

3. Much of this is, of course beyond the control of schools: family background and parenting probably play the major part. But schools and settings can still make a real difference, and recent analysis suggests there is a wide variation in performance. In some parts of the country (notably London), spectacular progress has been made. There is ample scope for collective learning from our peers.

4. In fact the latest evidence¹ suggests that there is wide variation in the proportions of students getting five good GCSEs between schools *even where pupils have similar levels of prior attainment*. Equally, there are bigger variations in the performance of pupils *within schools* than there are between schools. Overall, three times as many disadvantaged pupils get five good GCSEs including English and maths in the best schools than in the schools with the weakest results. This should be a source of encouragement to us: progress *is* possible. That said, the new accountability framework for secondary schools, with its tougher test of which subjects and qualifications "count", is likely to affect disproportionately those schools with large numbers of disadvantaged children.

¹ Most notably in "*Cracking the code: how schools can improve social mobility*" (October 2014)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/cracking-the-code-how-schools-can-improve-social-mobility

5. There is a growing consensus about strategies that can make a sustained difference. **Annex C** summarises some of the most recent evidence about "what works". Some of the key points that we have noted, in drawing up this strategy for North Yorkshire, include:

- The paramount importance of the *highest quality teaching* for all children and young people; equally, the relentless focus on progress for all, underpinned by the strongest *leadership*;
- The most effective schools and settings start with a *data-driven analysis* of where disadvantaged children are falling behind. The key is seeking to start from first principles in understanding the barriers to learning - whether they are about the school environment, the home environment, or other factors;
- the very best schools intervene *at the level of the individual student*, developing processes and structures that are able to identify whenever a student is starting to fall behind, and then intervening to improve that child's performance;
- *early intervention* is essential, as are the reforms designed to improve the quality and range of education from birth to five years²
- *teachers' expectations* of students from disadvantaged backgrounds are key – high expectations are crucial;
- new strategies may be needed to engage *parents and carers*, such as meeting on neutral ground and asking what we can do for the parent;
- the *Education Endowment Foundation toolkit*³ commands wide respect as an evidence-base for interventions;
- most commentators on this issue confine their definition of "disadvantaged" to pupils who have been eligible for Free School Meals at some point in the last six years ("FSM6"). However, there is an increasing focus on groups of *children* who may be at a disadvantage relative to their peers;
- those performing well for disadvantaged students do not apply a single magic formula. Success is *incremental* and based on a series of small changes rather than a single 'big bang'.

6. We have been particularly persuaded by the "five key steps" recommended by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, as a holistic framework for tackling the issue, which we would re-order as follows:

1. Incessant focus on the quality of teaching
2. Building a high expectations, inclusive culture
3. Using the Pupil Premium strategically to improve social mobility
4. Tailored strategies to engage parents
5. Preparing students for all aspects of life not just for exams.

We believe that these five steps should underpin all of our strategies for addressing the issue in North Yorkshire.

² See <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-the-quality-and-range-of-education-and-childcare-from-birth-to-5-years>

³ <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

7. Finally, we have been particularly impressed by the observations of the National Pupil Premium Champion, John Dunford, and his suggestions for a whole school approach to closing the gap. There is a brief summary of his findings from paragraph 14 onwards of **Annex C**.

4. Why this matters in North Yorkshire: a position statement

1. Pupil achievement data shows that disadvantaged pupils continue to perform less well than their peers at all key stages both locally and nationally, and the gaps between those eligible for free school meals and others are wider in North Yorkshire than the national average. In recent years there has been some progress in the County; however, this has now begun to stall. In 2014 the outcomes for North Yorkshire's Free School meals pupils showed attainment remaining below the national for similar pupils, although it is encouraging that the KS2 gap closed significantly.

2. The table below sets out the position in 2014. Further statistical information is at **Annex A**.

EYFSP	% GLD	National 2014	NY 2014	NY Change	NY rank of 150 LAs 2014 (2013)
	FSM	45%	40%		Attainment 103 (144)
	EY FSM Gap	-19%	-23%	+1%	Gap 110 (96)
KS2	%RWM4+				
	FSM6	67%	60%		Attainment 137 (141)
	KS2 FSM6 Gap	-17%	-21%	- 3%	Gap 121 (136)
KS4	% 5 A*CEM				
	FSM	33%	29%		Attainment na (85)
	KS4 FSM Gap	-27%	-33%	+1%	Gap na (100)

3. Comparing ourselves with our peers, the latest information suggests that:

- All 27 shire counties have lower % FSM6 than national average (between 15% and 28%);
- All except 4 shire counties have lower outcomes for FSM6 than the national average (between 57% and 69% - England average 67%);
- All shire counties have FSM6 outcomes which place them in the bottom 2 quartiles. 12 are in the bottom quartile (ranks 112 to 150), including North Yorkshire (rank 137);
- One shire, Warwickshire, is both a shire authority and a statistical neighbour, with a similar number of pupils as NY. Outcomes for all pupils in Warwickshire were 4 percentage points above NY, and although the disadvantage gap was above the national it was narrower than the gap in NY.

4. We have of course not been sitting back in this area in recent years. Indeed, North Yorkshire has had a broad range of strategies, projects and training aimed at closing the gap. Often schools and settings have been given financial support. **Annex B** sets out some of the current intervention projects running in North Yorkshire schools and settings.

5. In addition to these projects, the *North Yorkshire Closing the Gap Innovation Project* was launched to schools in November 2013 supported by funding from the Wrea Head Trust. Expressions of interest were invited from clusters of schools or teaching alliances who wanted to develop innovative ways of tackling the issue. The project is intended to take place over a period of three years and it is envisaged that some £ 200k will be released each year to schools to fund the proposed projects. The work is monitored by a project board consisting of local Headteachers, local authority advisers and academic partners representing The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Institute of Effective Education. **Annex B** also sets out brief details of the 15 proposals that have now been approved in the first two cohorts, involving over 120 primary and secondary schools.

6. In other words, there is a wide range of initiatives under way. However, we have to accept that whilst individual initiatives have been able to demonstrate impact, we have to have a greater impact across the County. We need to move faster and in a more coherent way. With the role and capacity of the LA changing as a result of government policy and funding cuts there will not be the same scope to support schools financially; nor will there be the same range of specialist advisers and other officers available. We need a new strategic framework.

5. Our strategic framework for making progress

Strategic Links with *Young and Yorkshire*

1. *Young and Yorkshire*, the Children and Young People's Plan for North Yorkshire, sets out a clear vision for the future of services for children and young people:
"We want North Yorkshire to be a special place where every childhood is wonderful and every young person thrives."

The Plan also sets out three over-arching priorities for 2014-17:

- Ensuring that education is our greatest liberator;
 - Helping all children to enjoy a happy family life;
 - Ensuring a healthy start to life.
2. Under those priorities there are a number of "supporting outcomes", a significant number of which refer – directly or indirectly – to the need to close the gap between more disadvantaged children and their peers, e.g.:
 - Life chances for children are improved through better educational outcomes in early years, primary and secondary education, including those of more vulnerable children;
 - Looked after children achieve improved educational outcomes;
 - Vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils are helped to close the attainment gap between themselves and others;
 - Children and families in challenging circumstances receive effective early help to become self-reliant;
 - Children enjoy good health and development, particularly in the early years;
 - Looked after children and children with disabilities or learning needs have improved health and well-being outcomes.

Our strategic framework for Closing the Gap

3. We have drawn up this *Closing the Gap* strategy with this vision, and these priorities and outcomes, in mind. This has led us to construct the following strategic framework in order to make rapid progress in this area:

*If North Yorkshire is to be a place where **every** young person thrives, we need to inject fresh rigour and urgency into our efforts to close the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged children and their peers.* In doing so, we will subscribe to the following ten principles across the Children's Trust Partnership:

- 1) We will put **high quality teaching and learning** at the heart of this strategy, recognising that inspiring teachers, teaching assistants and practitioners - with high aspirations for all children in their care - are the key to overcoming educational disadvantage. We will encourage the new Improvement Partnerships to subscribe to this, and to work with LA services, Teaching School Alliances and others to develop excellent programmes of Continuous Professional Development. For the Early Years, we will promote strong home learning experiences and will ensure parents and carers can access support and training opportunities.

- 2) We will adopt a **broad definition** of “disadvantage”. The debate is often couched in terms of socio-economic disadvantage, measured by those who have qualified for Free School Meals at any point in the previous six years (“FSM6”), or the pupil premium, or the early years pupil premium. However, we recognise other children who may be vulnerable or disadvantaged, and whom the evidence suggests may not be achieving outcomes at the level of their peers, including – but not confined to –
- a. Children looked after by the Local Authority
 - b. Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities
 - c. Teenage Parents
 - d. Young Offenders
 - e. Children and young people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups and those with English as a second language
 - f. Children and young people with parents in the armed forces
 - g. Young carers
 - h. Homeless young people
 - i. Summer born children, especially boys
 - j. Travellers
 - k. Children from single parent families, or parents undergoing separation
 - l. Children with parents or siblings in prison

We will seek to intervene *wherever* the evidence suggests there is an issue to be tackled. **Annex A** sets out some of the data we already have.

- 3) Notwithstanding the previous principle, we will keep uppermost in our minds the fact that this issue is about **individual children and young people**, not homogenous groups. We will resist labels and group interventions that fail to recognise this, and which may run the risk of limiting the expectations and aspirations of schools and teachers. Equally, we will wherever possible listen carefully to the views of young people, and their parents or carers, in constructing interventions.
- 4) We will adopt a **holistic approach** to Closing the Gap. At the level of the individual child, this means being sensitive to the fact that the possible causes of disadvantage may be multiple and complex in nature. At a “system” level, this means recognising that, while schools, settings and children's centres will be carrying forward most of the actions under this initiative, they will only succeed if their efforts are harmonised with:
- The new Prevention service and Healthy Child Programme has created local capacity for targeted whole family early intervention with young people with wider support needs;
 - The LA Social Care service which works intensively with those with more complex safeguarding and care needs;
 - Those involved in the assessment/support planning and specialist intervention of those working young people with SEN(D) including those young people who present behavioural challenges in school
 - Other Council Services beyond Children and Young People’s Services, including those responsible for economic development and the relief of poverty;

- Other potential partners including employers and Universities – making best use of the newly-established Higher York Collaborative Outreach Network, see 4 <http://www.higheryork.org/schools/>
- Parents/ carers: The engagement of parents in school life and in their children’s learning has a strong correlation with improved individual performance of all but particularly those on FSMs
- Childminders, other early years settings and local community leaders

Wherever it is appropriate and safe to do so, we will share information, and work in collaborative partnerships across organisational boundaries. Being holistic also recognises that even if the group of disadvantaged children is quite small, we will nevertheless need to adopt a whole-school approach. This is well illustrated in John Dunford’s diagram reproduced in paragraph 15 of **Annex C**.

- 5) Our interventions will be based on robust and transparent **data about performance and evidence about what works**. In particular, we will use data to underpin our challenge to schools and Improvement Partnerships, and to direct resources where they can achieve most good. We will evaluate all of our interactions so that we can effectively and swiftly spread best practice – scaling it up where appropriate – or stop activities that are not achieving their intended goals. We need to ensure that schools and settings – and individual teachers and practitioners – fully understand what the data is saying. We will promote use of the Education Endowment toolkit. We will review best national practice, including relevant Ofsted reports, as set out in **Annexes C and D**.
- 6) We will subscribe to the principles of **early intervention**. This applies from Early Years onwards, where we will engage with families even before birth and will promote the appropriate use of intensive language development and other interventions. We will develop models of collaborative working that promote sustainable improvement and build capacity. We will identify and respond quickly to SEND and other areas of vulnerability. We will employ knowledgeable and professional SENCOs and make effective use of the Early Years Pupil Premium. Our aim is to ensure that all young children in North Yorkshire are "ready for school". Early intervention is also a concept that can validly be applied at later stages of a child’s development – being sensitive to the emergence of potential problems, so that they can be tackled sooner rather than later.
- 7) We will focus on **transitions** (e.g. into setting, into reception, into secondary school) since research shows that problems associated with disadvantage can get worse at these crucial points in the young person’s journey: the attainment gap tends to widen as pupils move through education. We will understand and target children's individual vulnerabilities through robust observation; work with families and everyone who knows the child to manage all points of transition; and use local networks effectively to share information.
- 8) We will **challenge** wherever necessary – challenge individual children and young people to move beyond any self-imposed limitations; challenge ourselves as professionals to

ensure we are not unconsciously limiting children's aspirations; and challenge schools, Improvement Partnerships, and all parties to the North Yorkshire Children's Trust to address this issue with vigour and honesty.

- 9) We will **support** wherever necessary, building relationships of mutual trust and respect with children, parents and carers, teachers and other professionals. We will listen to their views and enable them to influence future developments.

- 10) We will use our collective influence to ensure that resources, both national and local, are directed towards Closing the Gap, including the Pupil Premium and any locally-available discretionary funding, having first ensured that there is a robust evaluation of the ability and capacity of a school to benefit from any new support.

6. Priorities and next steps

Guided by the Framework set out in the previous chapter, we have identified the following nine immediate priority actions:

- A. Reinvigorate the Closing the Gap Steering Group, to oversee the programme of interventions and ensure that they are enacted with urgency and rigour;
- B. Ensure that closing the gap is a key priority for schools, settings and Improvement Partnerships and is reflected through robust data and evidence in Improvement Plans, outcomes, funding allocations, scorecards and reports to the Education Partnership
- C. Define clearly the roles of the various parties in moving forward with this agenda – in particular:
 - i. The responsibilities for effective multi-Agency action on the part of *all* members of the Children’s Trust;
 - ii. The Local Authority as the champion of under-achieving pupils. This role recognises that the capacity of the LA is changing considerably as a result of government policy. The LA can nevertheless still facilitate, broker, commission and influence new ways of working to support schools;
 - iii. The Improvement Partnerships as the main mechanism on the basis of, irrespective of their OFSTED category;
 - iv. Other potential partners within the Council and beyond.
- D. Audit all current performance and practice so as to identify rapidly:
 - i. Particular areas of concern or outlying performance: a clear, transparent and unambiguous evaluation of all schools and settings in North Yorkshire;
 - ii. Local interventions that are proving successful and can be scaled up, including from the *Closing the Gap Innovation Project*;
 - iii. Activities that should be stopped because they are not having sufficient impact;
 - iv. Appropriate schools (rather than projects) on which to focus funding for Cohort 3 of the *Closing the Gap Innovation Project*.

In conducting this Audit we will have regard in particular to:

- the suggested “five steps” set out in the “*Cracking the Code*” report which is referred to above and in Annex C;
 - the suggested whole-school approach set out by John Dunford, referred to in Annex C;
 - relevant OFSTED reports on the Pupil Premium – see Annexes C and D;
 - We will ensure there is shared understanding of the links between strategies and projects; and that communications are rapid and effective.
- E. Set challenging targets at all levels – see section 7 for more details.
 - F. Ensure that national and local resources are allocated to addressing this issue – including the Pupil Premium, the Early Years Pupil Premium, and the remaining allocations within the *Closing the Gap Innovation Project*.

- G.** Focus on our strategies around particular reach areas i.e. the coast with our Scarborough Summit; three Lead Practitioners, one each of English, Maths and Science deployed in secondary schools in Scarborough and funded for the first year by the LA.

- H.** Develop discrete and ambitious priorities and targets for the Early Years so that the principles of early engagement, excellent learning experiences and high quality provision are established right from the outset. As above, activity will be concentrated in particular reach areas where the evidence suggests it is most needed.

- I.** Encourage all schools and settings, if they have not already done so, to identify a senior manager, and a Governor, with specific responsibility for this agenda.

- J.** We will work with schools and governors to set out a clear set of expectations for both them and the LA as we work together to close the gaps we currently have.

7. How we will know we are making a difference

1. We will set new and challenging targets for Closing the Gap at every appropriate level:
 - For individual children and young people so they have clear expectations
 - For schools
 - For clusters
 - For Improvement Partnerships
 - For the Local Authority and its Partners.

2. At Local Authority level, we will review the need to set new targets for any groups of children and young people who may be disadvantaged, such as those set out in the “broad definition” in chapter 5 above. In the meantime, we confirm the following targets which were set out in *Young and Yorkshire*:

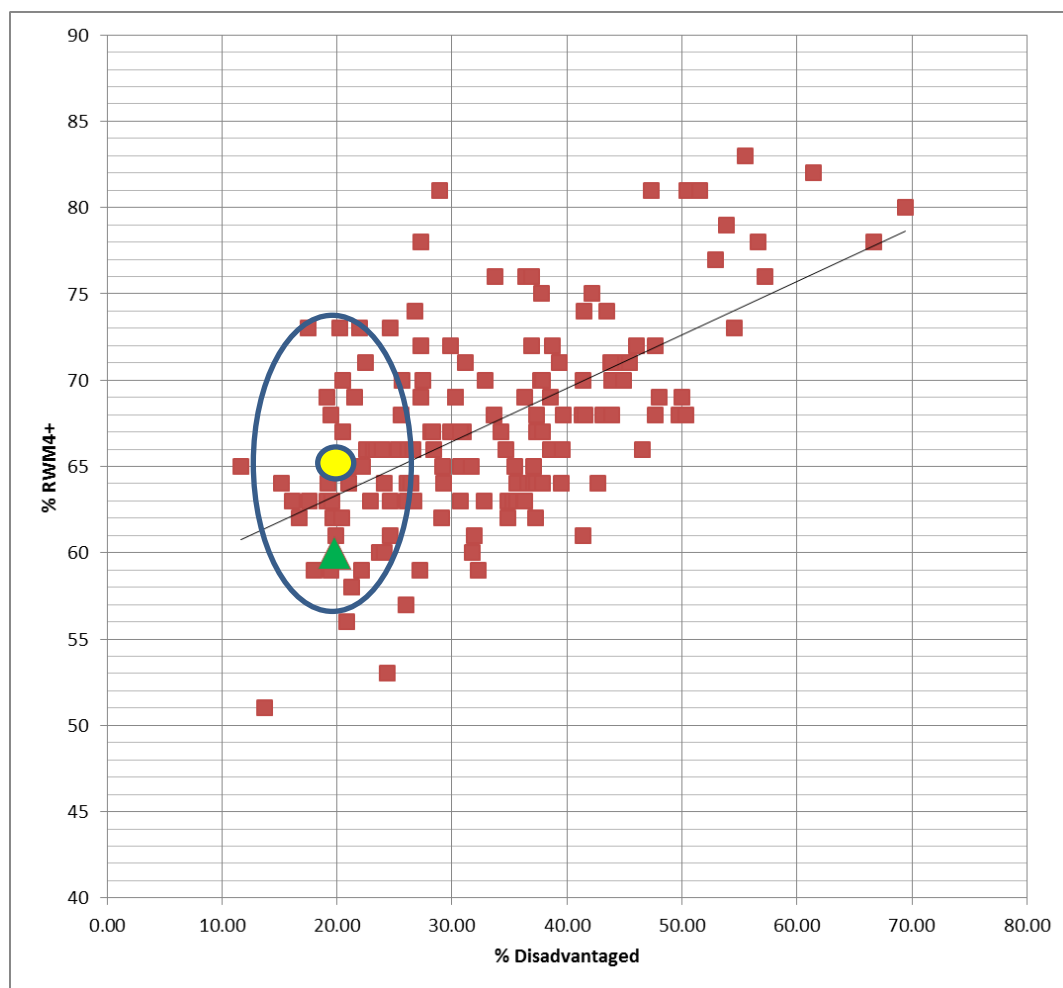
Measure	Position at the start of the Plan			Target		
	N Yorks.	National	Statistical Neighbours	Year 1	Year 2	End of the Plan
The attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school means and other pupils: The percentage of children reaching a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage	24.3%	36.2%	n/a	19%	17%	15%
The attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school means and other pupils: Level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and Maths at Key Stage 2	26.0%	19.0%	27%	2% wider than national	1% wider than national	Gap with national closed
The attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school means and other pupils: GCSEs at A* to C including English and Maths	31.7%	26.7%	32.6%	3% wider than national	1% wider than national	Gap with national closed
The attainment gap between pupils with statements or Education, Health and Care plans and other pupils: Reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2	70.0%	74.0%	n/a	Gap in line with national without reduction of overall	Gap reduced by 2% (pending new indicator and EHCPs)	Gap reduced by 4% (pending new indicator and EHCPs)
The attainment gap between pupils with statements or Education, Health and Care plans and other pupils: 5 GCSEs at A* to C including English and Maths	62.2%	61.2%	n/a	Gap in line with national without reduction of overall	Gap reduced by 2% (pending new indicator and EHCPs)	Gap reduced by 4% (pending new indicator and EHCPs)

Annex A: Statistical Overview

1. This first section is an analysis of outcomes for FSM6 pupils in England's 27 non-metropolitan counties. Ranks are out of 150 LAs.


Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing and maths level 4+

Across England, % of cohort FSM6 ranges from 14% (Wokingham) to 69% (Tower Hamlets). England average 31%. LAs with lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils tend to have lower outcomes, as does North Yorkshire (60% compared with average 67%).



Is there anything NY can learn from what others are doing?

There are LAs with similarly low % FSM6 as NY  who have higher outcomes for FSM6 pupils. 7 of those are also shire authorities and 5 are statistical neighbours.

One (Warwickshire ) is both a shire authority and a statistical neighbour, with a similar number of pupils as NY – is there something their schools and LA are doing which is not happening in NY? Outcomes for all pupils in Warwickshire were 4 percentage points above NY, and although the disadvantage gap was above the national it was narrower than the gap in NY.

The tables below show these comparative figures in more detail.

	% cohort disadvantaged	Percentage achieving the expected level
England	31.01	67
North Yorkshire	19.76	60
Wiltshire	19.89	61
West Berkshire (SN)	16.68	62
Dorset	19.64	62
Oxfordshire	20.41	62
Windsor and Maidenhead	16.15	63
Surrey	17.59	63
York	19.09	63
South Gloucestershire	19.55	63
Shropshire	22.87	63
Buckinghamshire	15.15	64
Leicestershire	19.19	64
East Riding of Yorkshire (SN)	20.97	64
Wokingham	11.66	65
Warwickshire (SN)	21.62	65
Gloucestershire	22.20	65
North Somerset	22.55	66
Hampshire	20.50	67
Bath and North East Somerset	19.46	68
Cheshire East (SN)	19.11	69
Hertfordshire	21.51	69
Warrington (SN)	20.49	70
Solihull	22.44	71
Richmond upon Thames	17.48	73
Kingston upon Thames	20.28	73
Trafford	21.97	73

Shire counties only:

	% cohort disadvantaged	Disadvantaged pupils		All other pupils		All pupils	All pupils		Disadvantage gap	
		Percentage achieving the expected level	Rank	Percentage achieving the expected level	Rank	Number of eligible pupils	Percentage achieving the expected level	Rank	Disadvantage Gap	Gap rank
England	31					5514				
Cambridgeshire	20.87	56	148	81	127	6100	76	118	25	148
Suffolk	26.03	57	147	79	144	7034	74	140	22	129
West Sussex	17.97	59	141	81	127	8058	77	103	22	129
Norfolk	27.21	59	141	80	139	7946	74	140	21	121
North Yorkshire	19.76	60	137	81	127	5815	77	103	21	121
Northamptonshire	23.67	60	137	81	127	7861	76	118	21	121
Worcestershire	24.15	60	137	82	110	5558	77	103	22	129
Lincolnshire	24.62	61	133	82	110	7173	77	103	21	121
Dorset	19.64	62	127	81	127	3961	77	103	19	96
Oxfordshire	20.41	62	127	82	110	6400	78	87	20	111
Surrey	17.59	63	112	85	57	10844	82	23	22	129
Staffordshire	24.60	63	112	81	127	8542	77	103	18	75
Buckinghamshire	15.15	64	98	83	92	5418	80	49	19	96
Leicestershire	19.19	64	98	82	110	6945	79	68	18	75
Somerset	24.15	64	98	82	110	5374	78	87	18	75
Kent	26.11	64	98	84	72	15454	79	68	20	111
East Sussex	26.43	64	98	83	92	4915	78	87	19	96
Warwickshire	21.62	65	90	85	57	5379	81	33	20	111
Gloucestershire	22.20	65	90	86	37	6122	81	33	21	121
Cumbria	23.14	66	78	83	92	4896	79	68	17	57
Devon	23.45	66	78	85	57	7181	81	33	19	96
Essex	23.95	66	78	83	92	14640	79	68	17	57
Nottinghamshire	26.14	66	78	83	92	8033	79	68	17	57
Hampshire	20.50	67	70	85	57	13331	82	23	18	75
Lancashire	28.16	67	70	86	37	12309	81	33	19	96
Derbyshire	25.62	68	58	86	37	7679	81	33	18	75
Hertfordshire	21.51	69	49	87	22	12336	83	15	18	75

Annex B: Case studies from North Yorkshire

1. The following box shows some of the mainstream projects and initiatives that are being widely used in North Yorkshire in order to close the gap:

Achievement for All (AfA) – early years, primary secondary (8 secondary schools, 11 primary/nursery)

Every Child a Talker (ECAT) – early years, training for practitioners and parents

Phonics counts – primary, training for teachers

Early Words Together- new National Literacy Trust project for children centre staff

Reading Intervention Programme – primary, secondary, special, training for teachers and TAs (338 schools, 528 TAs and teachers trained)

Paired Reading - primary and secondary, training for teachers, TAs and SENCOs

Talking Maths – early years, primary, early secondary, training for practitioners

1stclass@Number – primary, secondary training for TAs (180 trained)

Success@Arithmetic - new for Spring 2014; focus on any child L3b/c KS2 – KS3)

NumbersCount teachers – primary and secondary, 24 trained teachers

Numicon – primary, training for teachers

Inference Training – primary (KS2) and secondary, training for TAs and teachers

Mindsets project – Selby and Craven – cross phase action research project

OXY-GEN - Coast, Central and West – cross phase project

Literacy in Whitby – a cross phase project

2. The boxes below give brief details of the 15 proposals that have now been approved in the first two cohorts of the *North Yorkshire Closing the Gap Innovation Project*, involving over 120 primary and secondary schools:

Summary of Cohort 1 projects	
Cluster	Brief details of the project
Craven	A mathematics collaboration between the 5 schools to raise standards in Y4 mathematics (6 children in each school chosen who have gaps and have not made good progress over time) The key focus is on closing the gap in calculation and numbers for a group of low attaining and vulnerable children
HART alliance	The project will investigate whether the investment of time in preparing and providing specific feedback to parents/carers and the target child on a regular basis throughout the academic year makes a significant contribution to accelerating progress and closing the gap in <u>one</u> identified core subject.
Northallerton Primary	Does the implementation of Assertive Mentoring with vulnerable pupils raise attainment by increasing progress/attendance beyond expected rates?
Pickering	To what extent can the use of ICT, when used in small group interventions, impact on the rate of progress in grammar and maths in Year 2 and Year 3 ?
Scarborough Teaching Alliance	What are the most effective features of personalised interventions to ensure that EYFS and KS1 pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds can attain a good level in reading by the end of the key stage?
Selby Town Cluster	How much does an outdoor learning intervention accelerate progress and attainment in reading, writing and maths after one term for Key Stage 2 children?
Stokesley Partnership	What impact does increased engagement of parents have on the progress of FSM/Ever6 children with specific regard to Traveller Heritage and White Working Class children, in a rural setting?
Swaledale Alliance	To narrow the gap between pupils receiving the pupil premium and the rest of the cohort across the Swaledale Alliance at all phases by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating across all school phases through shared CPD • Raising aspirations of vulnerable pupils and their families • Developing literacy skills in order to develop attainment.
North Star Teaching School Alliance	Does specifically targeted support through the Achievement for All Programme close the attainment gap? With the long term aim to create a sustainable programme that is specific to North Yorkshire's disadvantaged young people and closes the achievement gap.
Whitby	To identify the current work relating to feedback that has already had an impact on closing the gap for pupil premium children, and develop this work with collaborative schools to develop their practice in marking and feedback.

<i>Summary of Cohort 2 Projects</i>	
Cluster	Brief details of the project
Filey Primary Partnership	<p>Can the use of modern technologies increase parental involvement and engage hard to reach parents & families by implementing a much more accessible and interactive online solution to learning within the school and home setting?</p> <p>Will greatly enhanced collaboration between children, parents and staff, within the cluster of schools involved in the project, have an impact on accelerate learning and close the gap with a specific focus on writing?</p>
Castle Alliance	How can we improve parental engagement to 'close the gap' for our most vulnerable groups of children from 2 years old funded across the primary age range up to Year 6 transfer to secondary school?
Catterick/Colburn	<p>Does a specifically targeted Mathematics initiative close the gap for individuals and groups of Year 2 and Year 3 pupils?</p> <p>This is a pilot mathematics collaboration between the 7 cluster schools as part of an Improvement Partnership to raise standards in Y2 and Y3 mathematics through an initiative entitled Catterick Counts.</p>
STAR Learning Alliance	Does raising the profile and importance of self-esteem and well being in children and their families have a direct impact on their academic achievement?
Caedmon College Whitby and the Coastal Primary Group	How far can gaps in literacy be further reduced by the involvement of parents and older siblings - through a "book club" approach – to support tailored individual literacy interventions designed to enable pupils to make rapid, sustained progress in their weakest areas thereby 'closing the gap' ?
North Star Teaching School Alliance	Continuation of Year 1 project

Annex C: What works - a survey of recent national publications

There is a growing evidence base of what works in this policy area. This Annex summarises the main conclusions from a number of recent national publications. **Annex D** contains weblinks.

1. The *Ofsted Analysis from "Unseen Children"* emphasised "getting the best leaders and teachers to where they are needed most". High quality teaching is crucial for pupil progress but especially for disadvantaged pupils.
2. There are numerous other relevant Ofsted reports into the Pupil Premium, with summaries of what does and doesn't work. The following are seen as *successful approaches*:

- PP funding ring-fenced to spend on target group
- Maintained high expectations of target group
- Thoroughly analysed which pupils were under-achieving + why
- Used evidence to allocate funding to big-impact strategies
- High quality teaching, not interventions to compensate for poor teaching
- Used achievement data to check interventions effective and made adjustments where necessary
- Highly trained support staff
- Senior leader with oversight of how PP funding is being spent
- Teachers know which pupils eligible for PP
- Able to demonstrate impact
- Involve governors

...and the following are seen as *less successful approaches*:

- Lack of clarity about intended impact of PP spending
- Funding spent on teaching assistants, with little impact
- Poor monitoring of impact
- Poor performance management system for support staff
- No clear audit trail of where PP money was spent
- Focus on level 4 or grade C thresholds, so more able under-achieved
- PP spending not part of school development plan
- Used poor comparators for performance, thus lowering expectations
- Pastoral work not focused on desired outcomes for PP pupils
- Governors not involved in decisions about the PP spending

3. The *Effective for School, Primary and Secondary Education project* identified a range of practices and pedagogical techniques associated with improved outcomes for disadvantaged learners. They included:
 - Improving the quality of feedback to learners
 - The effective use of 1-1 and small group teaching
 - Encouraging pupils to be actively involved in decision making.

4. The *Sutton Trust (2011)* review of international and UK research concluded that the effects of high quality teaching are especially significant for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. *“Over a school year, these pupils can gain 1.5 years’ worth of learning compared with 0.5 years with poorly performing teachers. In other words for poor pupils, the difference between a good teacher and a bad teacher is a whole year’s learning.”*
5. The *Joseph Rowntree Foundation* challenge the suggest that the barrier is purely low parental aspirations quoting research showing that 97% of mothers at birth of low income families wanted them to go to university. JRF suggest that the current evidence base on what helps close the attainment gap sees:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few interventions with good evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental involvement • Home instructions for parents of pre-school children • Family literacy initiative • Effective engagement of family by schools in pupil learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few interventions that are promising but not compelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring • Aim Higher • School based peer mentoring • Extra-curricular activities • Study support • Non-academic school based learning which may improve self-worth and connect us with learning.

6. Similarly the *Institute for Effective Education (York University)* found that successful classroom strategies are not specific to any grouping of vulnerable young people. They locate initiatives on a cost/impact axis and found:

High Impact/Lower Cost

- Feedback to learners
- Early years intervention
- Cognitive and self regulation strategies
- Peer tutoring and peer assisted learning
- Collaborative learning
- Phonics
- SEAL
- Small group
- Behavioural interventions

Low Impact/Higher Cost

- Ability grouping
- Physical environment
- Performance pay
- Teaching Assistants (per se)
- School uniform.

7. *The Tail publication (Paul Marshall)* does not find that the greater autonomy offer to schools improves the lot of disadvantaged students in the lower tail of the education distribution – “at best

only small beneficial effects on overall pupil performance or very little evidence of improvements for tail students”. They do not find that increased floor standards, rigorous inspections and forced academy conversion to be the solution. “Even if you get rid of all of the underperforming schools the situation is only marginally better – only a few more disadvantaged children perform well.”

8. *Professor Alan Dyson, Manchester University* challenges what he calls single strand interventions focussing, for example, only on what happens in the classroom as only getting us so far. What happens in the classroom affects only 30% of the variance in pupil outcomes. He describes how “health” have a longer history and language around “social determinants of health rather than obsessing on the quality of GP practice”.
9. There is some evidence that engagement with enterprise education has directly provided both inspirational and practical support that has enabled young people to move on with business ideas. Enterprise learning “had proved sticky – its principles and lessons seemed to linger long in the minds of the young people we studied”. (*Reading University*)
10. The *National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)* were recently commissioned to undertake a rapid review of parental engagement in education, with a particular focus on closing gaps in attainment for disadvantaged primary pupils. The evidence emphasises that it is important for schools to engage with parents in a variety of ways, rather than restricting contact to formal parent–teacher meetings. Ofsted’s (2011) research sought to identify good practice in parental engagement through visits to 47 schools (including 18 primaries) in varying socio-economic circumstances. All the schools used new technologies to a greater or lesser extent to communicate with parents. The authors noted that schools demonstrating the best home-school liaison practice took the approach that no family, however hard-to-reach, is unreachable. Schools used sensitive phone calls, home visits and meetings at unthreatening, neutral locations, and there were many instances of individual staff “going the extra mile” to engage with parents. Similarly, O’Mara et al. (2011), who reviewed the effect of family and parenting support interventions on children’s achievement and whose work features further in the following chapter, recommend that schools tailor their approach to the individual parent. Likewise Menzies (2013) writes of meeting parents “on their own terms”, making them feel comfortable, understanding their needs and interests, and involving other members of their communities
11. *The Structured Conversation, Achievement for All (AfA)* programme is available across England and involves a framework which aims, among other goals, to improve pupils’ progress and parental engagement. A key aspect is the use of the “structured conversation” to facilitate communication between school staff and parents. This focuses dialogue about the specific needs of pupils and their parents and enables more personalised approaches to teaching and learning. Many AfA schools are developing evaluation tools to further customise structured conversation to their context, and report enhanced data collection and tracking of pupil progress and attainment.
12. *Goodall et al. (2011)* found that:
 - There is robust evidence of the impact of family learning, literacy and numeracy (FLLN) programmes.
 - FLLN impacts positively on disadvantaged families.

- The benefits of FLLN outlast the duration of the intervention.
- Partnership and multi-agency arrangements are essential, and enable a range of external expertise to be drawn upon.
- Information-sharing between schools and other local services is likewise important

13. *“Cracking the code: how schools can improve social mobility” (October 2014)*

seeks to define the role that schools can play to improve social mobility and in particular to raise the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The report proposes five key steps that all schools can take to close the gap in attainment and in life chances and boost social mobility:

1. Using the Pupil Premium strategically to improve social mobility – this means primary and secondary schools using the dedicated funding they receive through the Pupil Premium to narrow attainment gaps between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and others.

2. Building a high expectations, inclusive culture – this means being ambitious and “sharp-elbowed” for all children, with the school leadership team and governors sending a clear message from the top that they have high expectations of all staff and all students.

3. Incessant focus on the quality of teaching – this means placing the provision of highly effective teaching, perhaps the single most important way schools can influence social mobility, at the centre of the school’s approach.

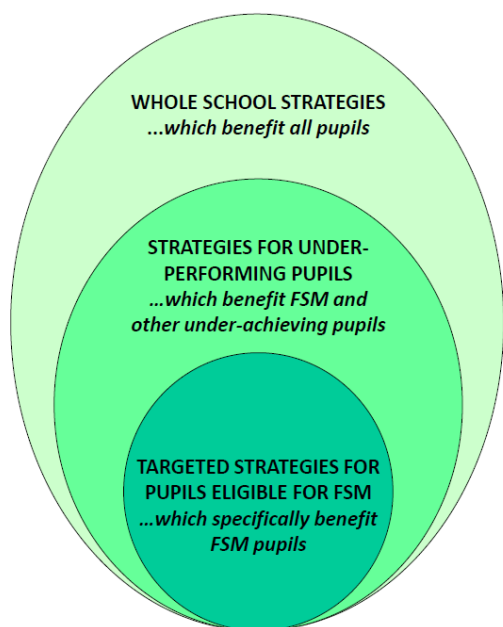
4. Tailored strategies to engage parents – this means having high expectations of parents and building engagement (and – where necessary – the confidence of parents in dealing with teachers) by, for example, considering meeting parents on neutral ground outside of the school, finding creative ways of getting those who did not have a good experience at school themselves to engage and helping parents to be effective in supporting their children’s learning – not passively accepting lack of involvement.

5. Preparing students for all aspects of life not just for exams – this means supporting children’s social and emotional development and the character skills that underpin learning. It also means working with students to identify career goals early and providing excellent careers advice, treating extracurricular activities as key to the school experience and – particularly in secondary schools - encouraging a strong focus on working with business and universities, not - as in some schools - treating these things as optional extras.

14. John Dunford, National Pupil Premium Champion, has offered a great many useful insights into these issues, not least in a National College for Teaching and Leadership report that he co-authored, entitled *Closing the gap: how system leaders and schools can work together*. He advocates the use of intensive tuition in small groups and poses the following questions:

- *Intensive tuition in small groups is very effective, particularly when pupils are grouped according to current level of attainment or specific need. Have you considered how you will organise the groups?*
- *How will you assess pupils' needs accurately and provide work at a challenging level with effective feedback and support?*
- *One to one tuition and small group tuition are effective interventions. However, the cost effectiveness of one-to-two and one-to-three indicates that greater use of these approaches would be productive in schools.*
- *Have you considered how you will provide training and support for those leading the small group tuition, and how you will evaluate the impact of it? These are likely to increase the effectiveness of small group tuition.*

15. John Dunford sets out a suggested “nested” approach to school strategies to close the attainment gap:



Whole school strategies might include...

- Quality teaching and learning, consistent across the school, supported by strong CPD culture, observation/moderation and coaching
- Engaging and relevant curriculum, personalised to pupil needs
- Pupil level tracking, assessment and monitoring
- Quality assessment
- Effective reward, behaviour and attendance policies
- Inclusive and positive school culture
- Effective senior leadership team, focused on PP agenda

Targeted strategies for under-achieving pupils might include...

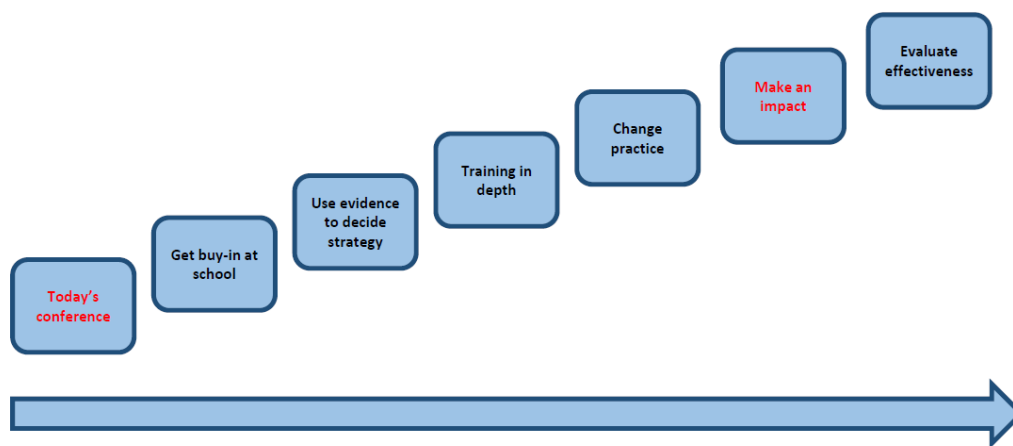
- Early intervention and targeted learning interventions
- One-to-one support and other ‘catch-up’ provision
- Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of impact of targeted interventions

- Extended services and multi-agency support
- Targeted parental engagements
- In-school dedicated pastoral and wellbeing support and outreach
- Developing confidence and self-esteem through pupil voice, empowering student mentors, sport, music, or other programmes such as SEAL

Targeted strategies for FSM pupils might include...

- Incentives and targeting of extended services and parental support
- Subsidising school trips and other learning resources
- Additional residential and summer camps
- Interventions to manage key transitions between stages /schools
- Dedicated senior leadership champion

16. His Conference slides frequently end with the following straightforward approach, which we could adopt in North Yorkshire if we replace the words in the first box with “sign up to this strategy”:



Annex D: Sources of further information

1. This Annex gives web references for some of the key supporting research documents and practical sources of help, including some mentioned in Annex C:

- **Unseen Children: Access and Achievement 20 years on: OfSTED evidence report**
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/unseen-children-access-and-achievement-20-years>

- **Other relevant OFSTED reports on the Pupil Premium:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/schools-should-ensure-that-all-pupils-achieve-their-best>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/moving-a-school-forward>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-lesson-in-school-improvement>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-route-to-a-good-and-improving-school>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-schools-use-pupil-premium-well-but-others-still-struggle>

- **What works in raising attainment and closing the gap: research evidence from the UK and abroad** - Professor Steve Higgins, School of Education, Durham University - A presentation giving an overview of the review of 42 pieces of research into improving attainment, closing the gap or overcoming disadvantage published between 2000 and 2011

http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/uploads/pdf/What_works_in_raising_attainment_and_closing_the_gap.pdf

- **The Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit** - “An accessible summary of educational research which provides guidance for teachers and schools on how to use their resources to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.”

<http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

- **Effective classroom strategies for closing the gap in educational achievement for children and young people living in poverty, including white working-class boys** *C4EO Research Review* - A research review showing what works in closing the gap in educational achievement for children and young people living in poverty, including white working-class boys.

http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/schools/classroomstrategies/files/classroom_strategies_research_review.pdf

- **Challenge Partners: Challenge the gap** - “An innovative and ambitious programme developed by Challenge Partners with funding from the Education Endowment

Foundation. It is delivered across England by 14 Facilitation Schools and improves the academic performance of pupil premium pupils

<http://www.challengepartners.org/challengethegap>

- **Closing the gap: how system leaders and schools can work together** - NCTL report April 2013. “This report summarises the outcomes and learning for other system leaders from a National College action research project which took place during 2012. The project worked with national leaders of education (NLEs) and teaching school alliances, organised into regional clusters, to examine how they could work with and support other schools to close gaps in attainment and support the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals.”

<http://www.isospartnership.com/uploads/files/ctg-how-system-leaders-and-schools-can-work-together-full-report.pdf>

- **Evaluation of the Pupil Premium** – DfE Research Report DFE-RR282

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243919/DFE-RR282.pdf

- **Evaluation of the City Challenge programme** - DfE Research Report DFE-RR215

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-city-challenge-programme>

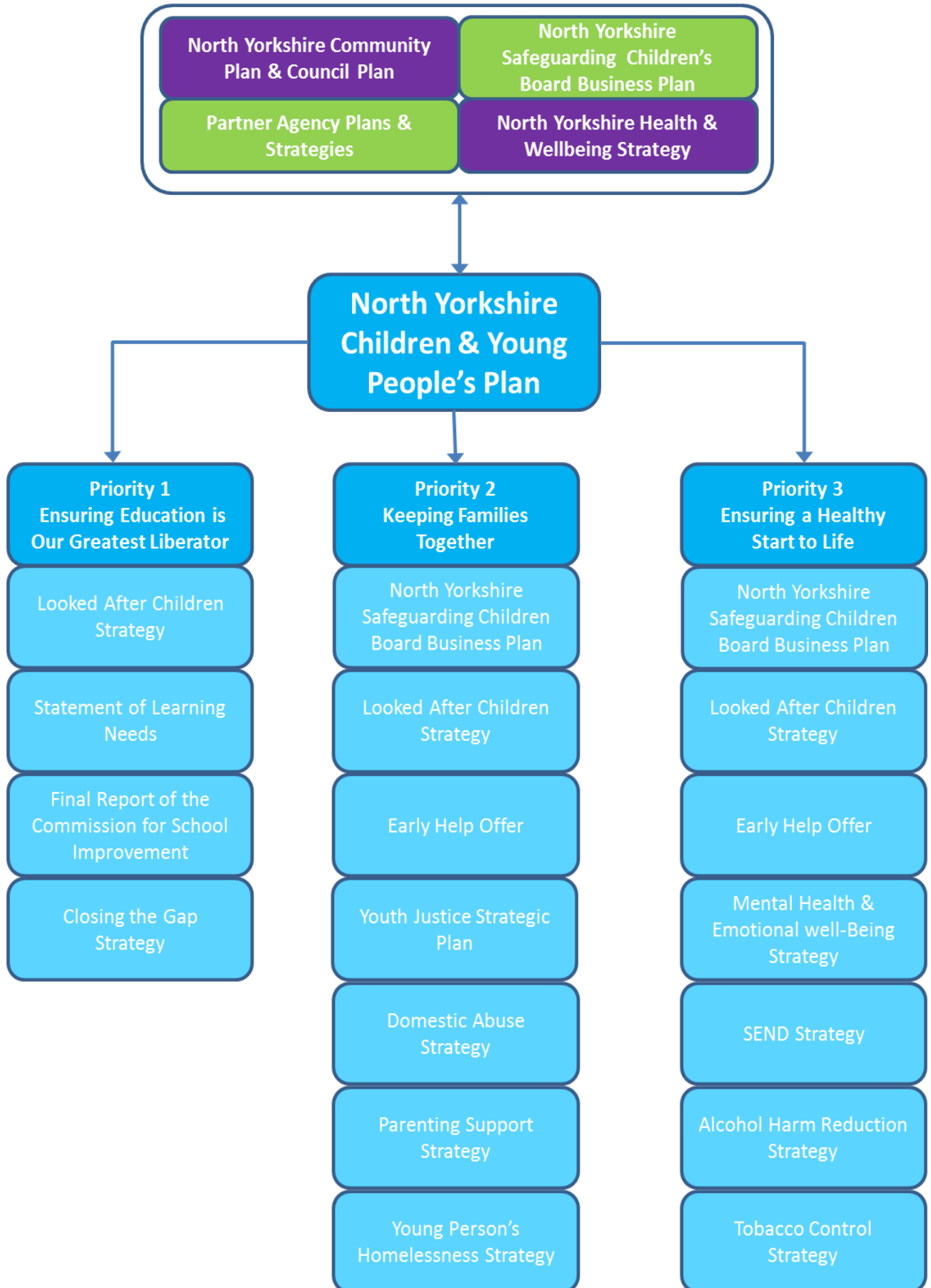
- **Closing the Gap: Test and Learn** - The Department for Education

<http://www.education.gov.uk/nationalcollege/testandlearn>

- **Cracking the code: how schools can improve social mobility** (*October 2014*)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cracking-the-code-how-schools-can-improve-social-mobility>

Appendix E: Links to Young and Yorkshire .





June 2015

Dear Pete

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PEER CHALLENGE: NORTH YORKSHIRE, JUNE 2015

Thank you for taking part in the eleventh Children's Services Peer Challenge activity in the region and the fifth to have school improvement as its focus. More specifically, you asked us to address the following:

School improvement in the context of the Local Authority School Improvement Inspection framework and specifically in relation to four other areas:

- *Corporate Leadership and Strategic Planning*
- *Monitoring, Challenge, Intervention and Support*
- *Support and Challenge for leadership and Management (including Governance)*
- *Use of Resources*

Your preparatory work for this Peer Challenge was extensive and was immensely helpful in enabling the peer challenge team to focus its activity appropriately. The team received a really good welcome and excellent co-operation and support throughout the process. It was evident to us all that all those we met were interested in learning and continued development.

We agreed to send you a letter confirming and elaborating on our findings as presented at the end of the Peer Challenge process.

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. A team of peers used their experience to reflect on the evidence you presented through documentation, conversation and observation. We hope their conclusions, captured in our final presentation to you and in this report will assist you in your on-going improvement. It is also important to note that many of the school improvement challenges you face are equally challenges for all local authorities.

1. Background

The Peer Challenge process developed for Children's Services across Yorkshire and the Humber builds on the peer review model that was developed by the Local Government Association (LGA) and all 15 Local Authorities are engaged in the process. Across the region two key areas of focus were initially identified: Local Authority arrangements to safeguard and look after children and Local Authority processes for securing school improvement.

In order to support the Peer Challenge process all Local Authorities have nominated key members from their senior leadership teams including their Director of Children's Services (DCS) to be trained in the Peer Challenge process and to lead Peer Challenges.

2. Process

The Peer Challenge in North Yorkshire was led by Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of Children's Services, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. He worked with a team comprising Gill Ellis, Assistant Director, Learning and Skills, Kirklees Council and Phil Weston, Head of the Bradford Achievement Service, Bradford Metropolitan District Council. The process was managed and coordinated by Rob Mayall (SLI Manager, Yorkshire and the Humber).

The team of three peer challengers spent a total of nine person days working in the Local Authority collecting evidence with which to frame their findings and drawing together their conclusions. This activity took place on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, the 24th, 25th and 26th June 2015. Prior to the Peer Challenge on-site activity, colleagues in North Yorkshire shared a wide range of information with the team to support its preparations and there were 2 preparatory team meetings.

As well as a desk-based analysis of documentation, the Peer Challenge process included 26 separate on-site activities, with over 80 participants – including a number of head teachers and some governors. We had individual discussions with political and corporate leaders and senior managers in North Yorkshire Council and two school visits. A range of focus groups enabled sample coverage of internal and external partners.

As a result of this activity we identified over 125 strengths and areas for development, which were refined into the four broad headings previously agreed with colleagues in North Yorkshire, plus a fifth 'wicked issue' heading. These provided a framework for the Challenge, initial feedback and this letter.

Initial findings, against the five key headings, were presented to the portfolio holder and senior managers of the Local Authority on 26th June.

3. Detailed Findings

3.1 Corporate leadership and Strategic Planning

Strengths

- Excellent drive and ambition at the highest level. This was something we observed and had described to us consistently. We observed consistency, clarity and passion amongst most senior officers and politicians we spoke with during the challenge process. This drive and ambition is something we noted has had an effect across and through the system.

'Schools have now got a thirst for it' (Head teacher)

- System-wide acceptance of the need to improve. We saw no evidence of complacency, despite the risk of this which comes with some of your performance levels being of a consistently good standard. There is a clear understanding of where performance needs to improve and the driving ambition for improvement is

seen as one which is no less than what children and young people in North Yorkshire deserve

- Clear, widely endorsed vision. Nearly everyone we saw, from politicians, to officers, to head teachers and governors supported and was able to articulate the vision of ‘closing the gap’ and ‘every school good or outstanding.’ We also had described to us, the strong links between a vision for school improvement and a broader economic vision – with examples of these links being a strong emphasis on the development of advice and guidance for young people and strong engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnership
- A broad consensus that there has been a step change for the better over the last two years. One head teacher remarked that there has been:

‘A real change in culture over the last 18 months.’

Some head teachers commented on the build-up of trust between schools and the local authority over the last two years and a clear vision for a partnership approach to improvement. Others commented favourably on the accessibility and visibility of senior officers and their willingness to tackle difficult issues ‘head on’.

Areas for development

- Communicate the vision and clarify the actions required to implement the vision effectively. Whilst nearly everyone was able to articulate the headline aspirations (‘Every school good or outstanding’ and ‘Closing the gap’), there were various interpretations of what ‘closing the gap’ means and few could describe the steps that need to be taken to achieve these broader aspirations, or the emerging context in which these aspirations sit. For instance, there is a need for a greater understanding and articulation of the impact of demographic change and, we felt, a need to share with schools a vision for the future which helps them to think about implications for a future curriculum, particularly one which addresses the divide between the academic and vocational.
- It would be helpful to develop, and then describe, the range of inter-connected actions which need to underpin the vision and for these to be disseminated as part of a measured and clear communications strategy. This will aid understanding, but more significantly help secure a common focus on the actions that will make most difference and smooth the transition to a self-improving school system:
 - Develop a clear vision for non-statutory education, i.e. early years and post 16 education and training. A number of the head teachers we spoke to were grappling with the creation of visible and meaningful post 16 learning, but this seemed to be in the absence of a clear strategic steer, which some would have valued. Equally, consideration needs to be given to the development of a clear strategic position for early years learning
 - Articulate the role that education, learning and skills play in economic growth and development. Whilst we noted some good links with the economic agenda, we think there is more you could do to describe how education inter-relates with emerging ‘people’ and ‘place’ agendas and secure common understanding and commitment across the system for the place of education in achieving North Yorkshire’s ambitions

3.2 Monitoring, Challenge, Intervention and Support

Strengths

- There is a good knowledge of school performance. In several meetings we heard of how an understanding of school performance, informed by qualitative and quantitative analysis is informing actions. The cycle of regular visits to schools helps the LA to further their understanding of how schools are doing. Head teachers, particularly in schools causing concern, reported high levels of support from the LA. Head teachers described high visibility of LA staff and a generous responsiveness to their needs in terms of advice and resources. Some of this support is provided from within LA resources and is now increasingly brokered from within the school system, for instance, one head teacher had received NLE support brokered by the LA and had found this particularly helpful.
- A leadership team that is ready for the challenge. We were impressed with a leadership team that had a shared view about the change required to secure improvement and a common commitment to delivering services to achieve this. Part of this readiness is a change in culture, which we observed throughout the challenge, and which was described by one person as:

‘A move from ‘we can’t do it here because...’ to, ‘we can do it’

- Some good examples of closing the gap initiatives. This includes work on the ‘stronger families’ agenda, addressing prejudices faced by LGBT young people, recognised by Stonewall as best practice, progress towards the SEND reforms and innovative use of pupil premium to improve progress and raise attainment of children in care. . Your high numbers of care leavers in University (30) is also noteworthy.
- Some emerging examples of school to school support and challenge. Although the examples were limited, they may be indications of the ‘green shoots’ of a change towards a self-improving school system – and as such, need to be captured and disseminated. As an example we heard of schools working together in one partnership on self-developed peer challenge activity.

‘The LA has taken a positive strategic lead. The challenge now is for schools to take responsibility for all schools across the system’ (Head teacher)

‘Support from the LA has been fantastic’ (Head teacher)

Areas for Development

- Some examples of a lack of pro-active early intervention where there are indicators of school decline. Whilst we noted a good understanding of school performance, we heard of cases where the LA was not as responsive as desirable, with several months gap between identification and proactive and effective intervention. This may, in part be linked to the lack of availability of appropriate capacity to meet need. In one extreme example, a head teacher said

‘A year was lost before a meaningful package was provided’ (Head teacher)

Some governors expressed a view that EDAs had not been good at spotting early signs of decline – but moved quickly when a school went into an Ofsted category. This was corroborated by a number of headteachers.

We also noted in one case (April to December 2014) that the LA action plan and the school's own action plan were not consistent

- The LA needs to consider whether there is an appropriate balance between challenge and support. We heard of some examples, mainly recent, of high levels of challenge from EDAs, but had described to us a number of examples where the emphasis seemed to be on generous support, rather than incisive challenge, underpinned by rigorous analysis. There was a view that expressed to us that EDA reports were not felt to be challenging enough. The balance is important and it would be appropriate for the LA to reflect on how it would wish both challenge and support to be provided and then how to ensure a consistent approach across its teams. There were also some comments about inconsistent support from EDAs – but these were mainly historical and related to turnover. Head teachers reported a greater consistency of late. Nevertheless, the LA might want to consider how it ensures consistency across EDA support.
- The LA needs to reflect on the *impact* of initiatives to close the gap. Whilst we heard of numerous good examples of closing the gap activity, we saw less evidence of the impact of this. We would recommend that the impact of CtG activities needs to be strategically evaluated before deciding whether this broad strategy could be more effective if there was greater focus, maybe through a programme management methodology.
- The LA needs to ensure that head teachers have the skills to provide effective challenge to their peers in the new model for school-led improvement. We heard that relationships between and across schools are good – but saw little evidence of where robust headteachers' peer challenge had had a significant impact to date. We heard that cluster arrangements currently focus more on support and 'soft' challenge. A culture of respectful challenge is a key ingredient in any self-improving school system and we were not provided with evidence that this is yet fully in place.

3.3 Support and Challenge for Leadership and management (including Governance)

Strengths

- Initiating and carrying through a Commission to move toward an innovative, education partnership approach. The Commission was a powerful activity – it put a marker down about the way the LA wanted to conduct itself, emphasising rigour, vision and partnership. It is a model that might usefully be applied to other complex issues in the improvement arena (see 'Your wicked issue')
-
- A clear understanding of the importance of governance in delivering the vision, demonstrated in several ways: A well respected governor support service, with the advice and guidance it provides being highly valued; there has been an investment in the Governor Support Service with new senior leadership resources. This has enabled the Service to be seen as integral to North Yorkshire's school improvement journey and is already bringing a greater rigour to its activity, an example being the work that is in progress to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the health of governing bodies (due to conclude in autumn 2015).

This will inform existing intelligence from governor clerks and might usefully be enhanced with a systematic gathering of intelligence from EDA visits, to enable a more informed targeting of support; the governor support service has responded positively to requests from schools to explore new structural solutions and provided workshop activity – appropriately joined up with EDA colleagues.

‘School governance has the potential to be the biggest barrier and also the greatest enabler’ (Head teacher)

- There has been an up-skilling of LA officers who now provide better challenge and support than in the past. Any criticism we heard about the skills and abilities of LA Officers, and particularly EDAs was historical. Some examples were given of improved knowledge and skills of individual officers over the last year which has made a significant and positive difference to their ability to support and challenge.
- A clear view that leadership across the school system should be led by teaching school alliances. The closure of the Leadership Academy was a bold, but considered action, demonstrating the LAs commitment to leadership being taken forward in a self-improving school system.

Areas for Development

- It would be appropriate for the LA to review its position on the use of statutory and non-statutory powers of intervention. We noted a small number of warning notices issued of 9 over the last 6 years and would suggest that the thresholds you have previously used may be set too high to provide the swift and incisive interventions necessary to aid progress towards your aspirations.
- There is a clear need for school governors to have greater understanding and ownership of the bigger picture. You have recognised the importance of the contribution that governors can make in the journey to ‘good or outstanding schools’ and some of the work you are already doing to develop their potential, but we feel that there is more you could do in a systematic way to help governors understand the challenges they will face and the opportunities that present themselves in working towards your shared vision for school improvement. There was some feedback that the quality of governor training was variable.
- It would appear that plans to develop leadership capacity across the system are under developed and not widely understood. Whilst it was a bold and symbolic move to close the Leadership Academy, this has left many with a feeling that there is a leadership development void, with the anticipated lead from TSAs not yet realised in terms of a tangible, coherent and consistent offer. This may in part be perception rather than reality, but head teachers and others need some reassurance about the ways in which leadership talent will be spotted, nurtured and developed, particularly as high quality leadership will be so central to your continuous improvement. There may also be a capacity issue which is less to do with identifying leaders who can support others, and more to do with the viability of leaders being released when in so many schools there is no economy of scale to enable the absence of a leader to be managed.
- As TSAs and MATs continue to grow and develop their relationships with historic arrangements, e.g. clusters, require clarity. Some head teachers were unclear about the respective roles of clusters and TSAs. There is a certain inevitability that a system which is being encouraged to grow organically (which is a positive reflection of your commitment to distribute leadership of the agenda) will have

some 'rough edges' as it evolves and develops, but you might want to reflect on the stating (or re-stating) of your intentions for what these emerging arrangements will deliver in terms of outcomes, in order that head teachers and others can operate with some freedoms but within a framework. An example of the need for greater clarity came from conversations with some head teachers where they described the need for a 'mandate' – or explicit 'permissions' to explore new structural solutions. You may be clear that they already have this - which then turns this into a communication challenge. Some schools are 'getting on with it'

'Because there is no Teaching Alliance in the area we have set up our own challenge partners' (Head teacher)

The fact that this is happening may give some comfort to the LA that school leaders are taking ownership of the agenda - but it was expressed by head teachers as a default position rather than part of a strategy to transfer ownership of the agenda.

3.4 Use of Resources

Strengths

- You have made financial commitments which are a tangible and powerful indicator of your intent to drive forward improvement. The most obvious examples of this would be your investment in the Scarborough area and the funding you have devolved to the Partnership Board as a commissioning budget. We also noted investment in the school governance service and investments to improve capacity.
- There is a clear rationale for traded services via SmartSolutions, which goes beyond a financial imperative. Some of your traded services are provided because of your belief in supporting music/outdoor learning and although it is important that the overall offer is viable, you have created space for activities for which you believe there is a philosophical/educational imperative. You have a strong traded offer, through SmartSolutions, which is led from the top, with the CX, DCS and Finance Director making up the executive group. There are high levels of take up for your offer and you are also exploring how your traded offer and the emerging offer from teaching school alliances can be made coherent.
- Evidence of sound, medium-term financial planning with plans in place to reduce the budget for school improvement whilst still retaining sufficient capacity to drive the school improvement agenda. This is due to innovative solutions in planned to reduce high cost areas such as numbers of, and provision for, LAC. The handle on financial challenges is a reflection of the corporate strength in how the council is managed.
- Basic need sufficiency planning is understood and in hand, with £55m available through a range of sources to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet the demand of an additional 7,000 primary and 1700 secondary pupils anticipated over the coming years.

Areas for Development

- We think that you should risk assess the market for traded services in light of the likely increased plurality of the school economy compounded by a decrease in real term funding for schools. Some calculations suggest an increase in costs to school budgets of estimates of 7 to 12% by 2020 and if so, then their financial flexibility

will be reduced and it will be the variable rather than fixed costs that will be most vulnerable.

- Ensure that officers apply a VFM approach in relation to allocating resources to improvement priorities in every school. We noted an apparently generous allocation of resources to schools causing concern, not always underpinned with a careful analysis of the solutions most likely to lead to positive change and often without reference to the school's ability to purchase or contribute towards the solution. We were also unsure about how equitably resources were distributed or whether the distribution was overseen at a strategic level. This might further a culture of dependency and high expectation of central solutions to local challenges which runs counter to the culture you are trying to develop.
- You need to accelerate the increase in the number of system leaders and teaching schools to increase school improvement capacity. Leadership is a key issue for North Yorkshire and an immediate challenge is to create greater leadership capacity to support development in schools and particularly across the school system.
- We noted that individual strategic groups often had a clear remit, but saw less of a clear description of the way in which the parts of the whole work together – what is the inter-relationship of the various fora?
- Your aspirations for teaching school alliances was unclear to some – and perhaps need to be reinforced/articulated differently to ensure a shared understanding across the system.

3.5 Your wicked issue- Small schools

Over half your primary schools have less than 120 on roll, with about 25% having 60 pupils or fewer, and slightly under half of your secondary schools have less than 700 pupils, with over a quarter having less than 500 on roll. We understand that many of these schools perform valuable functions as centres of communities and have a role to play in both the people and place agendas.

We also recognise that smaller schools are good and outstanding with strong outcomes. However, given your focus on sector-led improvement, building capacity and tightening resources we think these questions are worthy of consideration :-

- How can the sector maximise leadership opportunities across all schools, recognising that smaller schools cannot provide the remuneration of bigger ones and can find it more challenging to provide leadership development?.
- How will the sector meet the challenge of increased costs on school budgets over the next few years which will inevitably impact on smaller schools. Given the number of small schools across the county, how is the sector addressing this strategically and pro-actively.?
- How can the sector build capacity and release leaders to provide support to others and engage in developments and collaborative working around school improvement ?
- We heard of good examples of federations that have the ambition to raise performance, improve learning opportunities and maximise resources. Does the lack of capacity in smaller schools creates challenges in releasing

leaders to provide or receive support and development or engage in collaborative working?

You might want to consider applying the Commission methodology to this challenge – it has already been effective and was generally well received and presents as an excellent model to move this agenda forward.

4. Next Steps

You and your colleagues will now want to consider how you incorporate the team's findings into your improvement plans. We hope that you find our reflections helpful.

It is important that this letter describes accurately what we have observed and analyzed and that it provides you with an appropriate summary to facilitate change. If this letter contains any factual inaccuracies, please do not hesitate to contact me and amendments will be made as appropriate. If you have any concerns or comments about the analysis or recommendations, do not hesitate to contact me in the first instance. If we are unable to resolve any issues, there is a mechanism for escalating concerns, which would normally be to the Chair of the SLI Executive group. A sub group of the SLI Executive will consider any concerns you may have.

Once again, thank you for agreeing to receive a Peer Challenge and to everyone involved for their participation.

Yours sincerely

Ian Thomas
LEAD DCS for Peer Challenge in North Yorkshire

THE PUPIL PREMIUM

Next Steps

Sutton Trust and Education Endowment Foundation
July 2015



Education
Endowment
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FOREWORD

Today's summit is an opportunity to take stock on the pupil premium and the use of evidence to improve results for disadvantaged pupils.

There is no doubt that the pupil premium has enabled schools – including many in areas not traditionally seen as facing significant disadvantage – to do more to improve the results of their less advantaged pupils. But equally, the data suggests that we still have much to do to ensure that those from poorer families do as well as their classmates. Some schools have closed that gap, but many still have a long way to go.

Research trials being run by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) are feeding into the Teaching and Learning Toolkit, initially published by the Sutton Trust and now hosted and developed by the EEF. The Toolkit, and the new EEF Families of Schools tool, are just two of the resources available to schools to help them discover what works and what is likely to be most cost-effective in improving the results of their pupil premium recipients. Our new polling published today suggests a big increase in the use of research by schools and strong use of our Toolkit. But there is still much more we need to do to embed research into schools, and for all teachers to see it as part of their armoury.

As the Government considers how the pupil premium is deployed over the next five years, it may also be time to consider whether rewards are built into the way it is distributed. Ofsted's expectations have concentrated minds and we have keenly supported the Pupil Premium Awards, which will this year go to 630 schools, but in the next phase of the premium it may be time to embed such rewards within the distribution of the premium itself.

I hope that today's summit – and this report – enables us to improve the pupil premium and its impact in the coming years. Giving disadvantaged young people the best start in life is a vital national endeavour that will pay dividends in providing a more skilled workforce and a stronger social fabric for the future.

Sir Peter Lampl, Chairman, Sutton Trust and Education Endowment Foundation
Chairman
Sutton Trust



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continued support for the pupil premium, to improve attainment for disadvantaged pupils.**

The pupil premium should remain as a key lever to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Its success will depend on the degree to which it is spent effectively. This means schools working together more to maximise impact and build capacity, and a sustained effort by the Department for Education, Ofsted and others to make a genuine improvement in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, with appropriate accountability.

- **Continue paying the pupil premium on the basis of disadvantage, not prior attainment.**

It is important that the premium is paid for all disadvantaged pupils, without discrimination between low and high attainers. Doing otherwise - as some have suggested - would be bad for social mobility. It would also send perverse signals to successful schools. Recent Sutton Trust research has shown that disadvantaged but bright pupils fall behind at school, and it is important that schools use their premium funding where appropriate to provide stretching lessons for able disadvantaged pupils as well as helping low attainers to make good progress. This is also particularly important in improving later access to higher education.

- **A strong commitment to the promotion of rigorous evidence, particularly where it has been tested in randomised control trials.**

Evidence is a crucial tool which schools should use to inform their decision making and ensure that they identify the “best bets” for spending, but it must be acted upon. The EEF’s own qualitative research is consistent with this view. Even where money is spent on strategies which research shows have not always been effective, evidence can help schools identify steps which make success more likely. A good example is the way in which the EEF has evolved its evidence on the use of teaching assistants to show how they can make a difference with the right structures.¹ Ofsted should consider a schools’ use of evidence in their inspections and schools should be supported to evaluate approaches themselves. As we move towards a more school-led system, opportunities to build capacity on the effective use of evidence between schools and across trusts should be encouraged and recognised.

- **Improved teacher training and professional development so that all school leaders and classroom teachers understand how to use data and research effectively.**

Questions in the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) Teacher Omnibus Survey for the Sutton Trust showed that only 4 per cent of teachers would spend the money first on improving feedback between teachers and pupils, a relatively inexpensive measure that could add eight months to pupils’ learning. Research shows that improving feedback can be a highly effective way to improve teacher development. And only 1 per cent would use peer-to-peer tutoring schemes, where older pupils typically help younger pupils to learn, an equally cost-effective measure to deliver substantial learning gains. Of course, any such

¹ educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/teaching-assistants-should-not-be-substitute-teachers-but-can-make-a-real-d/

measure requires effective implementation, but it is important that schools consider cost effectiveness where it can enable their premium funding to go further

Resources such as the Teaching and Learning Toolkit provide a good entry point to research, but more could be done through initial teacher training and professional development to equip teachers with the skills needed to engage with education research and to foster an understanding of the ways in which research can be used.

- **More effective systems to allow schools to identify pupils eligible for pupil premium funding.**

Schools are currently reliant on individual parents to apply for free school meals for their child, which means that schools only receive pupil premium funding for those pupils if their parents have been pro-active. The Government should consider introducing a data sharing system so that schools are automatically informed when pupils are entitled to free school meals and, therefore, pupil premium funding.

- **Extension of pupil premium awards so that schools that successfully and consistently improve results for all while narrowing the attainment gap are properly rewarded.**

Government should also consider linking some of the pupil premium systematically to school rewards, so that schools that successfully and consistently improve results for all while narrowing the attainment gap are properly recognised. The Pupil Premium Awards scheme is a welcome initiative, and it has rewarded over 600 schools this year, but consideration should be given to making this more systematic in future so successful schools are automatically rewarded. The opportunities to innovate that exist in a system with increasing autonomy increase the importance of doing this. In particular, schools should be rewarded for evaluating innovation robustly. In addition, where new school networks and structures exist these should be designed in such a way that increases the spread of knowledge to other schools, so that greater autonomy does not lead to increased isolation, and the pupil premium could help facilitate shared innovations that improve standards for disadvantaged pupils.

INTRODUCTION: WHERE NEXT FOR THE PUPIL PREMIUM?

The pupil premium

The pupil premium was introduced by the Coalition government in April 2011 to provide additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. The main difference between the premium and previous funding for disadvantaged pupils is that the premium is linked to individual pupils. Previous governments have provided extra resources for such pupils through extra funding to local authorities with high levels of poverty. Indeed, the Institute for Fiscal Studies has pointed out that pre-premium extra funding in the system attached to deprived pupils amounts to £2000 in primary schools and £3000 in secondary schools.² But this is the first grant paid to schools for each disadvantaged pupil, regardless of where the school is located.

The amount provided has grown over the years to total £1,320 per primary pupil in the current financial year and £935 for secondary pupils.³ A total of £2.5 billion a year is now spent on the premium, over 6% of the £38.8 billion schools budget. The premium is paid for pupils who have been eligible for free school meals over the previous six years or who have been in care. Schools also receive £1,900 for pupils who have been in care but are now adopted or left care under certain guardianship orders. A separate grant of £300 is paid to schools to enable them to support the emotional and social well-being of service children.

More recently, an Early Years' Premium has been introduced for disadvantaged three and four-olds receiving free pre-school education.⁴ It will complement the government-funded early education entitlement by providing nurseries, schools, and other providers with up to an additional £300 a year for each eligible child. The government has committed £50 million to fund the Early Years' Premium in 2015-16, and the government estimate that 170,000 will receive it (approximately 13% of all 3- and 4-year-olds).

The government has decided against ring-fencing the premium, relying instead on schools publishing details of spending on their websites, Ofsted inspections, league table measures and more recently, awards for successful schools. Individual schools have responded to the expectation from Ofsted that schools show clear policies for their pupil premium pupils, and Ofsted looks closely at a school's results for those pupils before an inspection. Failure to do enough for pupil premium pupils in otherwise high attaining schools with relatively few pupil premium pupils has led to some losing their outstanding status. More recently, the Government introduced Pupil Premium Awards, which were provided to over 600 schools this year, including prizes of £250,000 for national winners and £100,000 for regional winners, as well as hundreds of smaller awards.⁵

The Department for Education, Ofsted and headteachers' associations have also encouraged schools to use evidence of what works in raising attainment when spending their pupil premium allocations. A key source of this evidence is provided by the Teaching and Learning Toolkit, initially published by the Sutton Trust and Durham University, and since hosted and extended by the Education Endowment Foundation. The Toolkit includes

2 <http://www.ifs.org.uk/bns/bn121.pdf>

3 <https://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings>

4 <https://www.gov.uk/early-years-pupil-premium-guide-for-local-authorities>

5 *ibid*

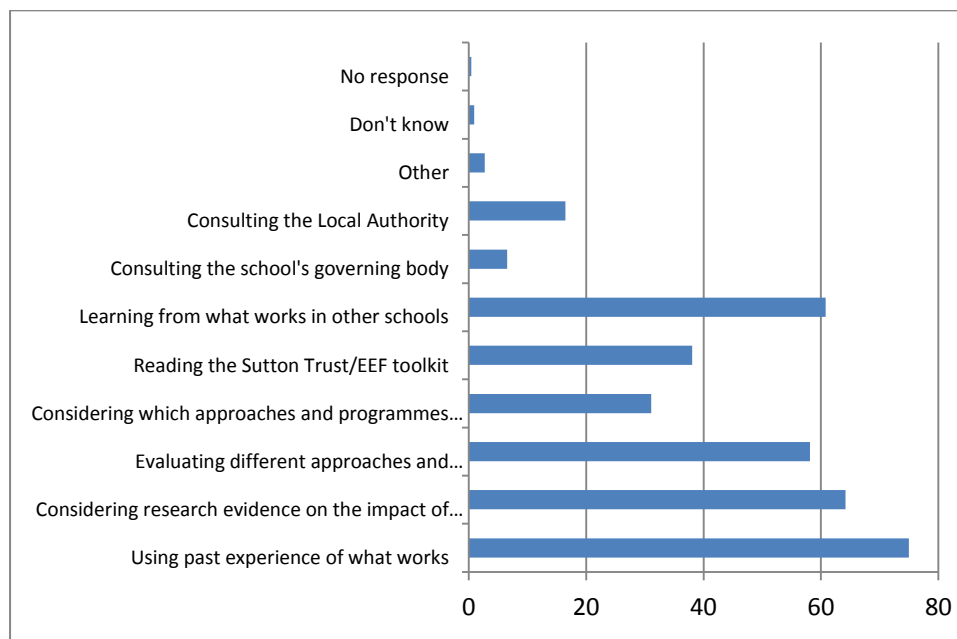
evidence on 34 categories, indicating whether or not they make measurable learning gains (expressed in months of learning value), the strength of available evidence and their relative cost.⁶ The EEF's trials help update the Toolkit on a regular basis. It has been complemented by a new Families of Schools tool which allows schools to benchmark their performance against schools with a similar profile, including how well they compare in the attainment of their pupil premium pupils.⁷

How are schools responding to the pupil premium?

For the last four years, the Sutton Trust has commissioned polling of teachers and school leaders on how they are using the pupil premium. Our polling using the NFER Teachers' Voice Omnibus has allowed us a unique insight into changing attitudes to the premium and how it is used.⁸ This year, NFER surveyed a representative sample of 1,478 teachers in March 2015 in both primary and secondary schools for their Teacher Voice Omnibus survey.

Over the past four years there has been a growing willingness by senior leaders to say that they use research in deciding which approaches and programmes to use in improving pupil learning. Schools however also use their past experience of what works. This year, 64% of senior leaders said they would consider research evidence, compared with 52% in 2012. And many schools evaluate different approaches and programmes before deciding what to adopt (58% of senior leaders).

Figure 1: How does your school decide which approaches and programmes to adopt to improve pupil learning? (Senior leaders)



6 <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/>

7 <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/families-of-schools/>

8 The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) surveyed a representative sample of 1,478 teachers in February 2015 in both primary and secondary schools for their Teacher Voice Omnibus survey. <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/teacher-voice-omnibus-survey/>

Around half of secondary school leaders (48%) and a third (32%) of primary school leaders also say they make use of the Sutton Trust/EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit in making these decisions.

This year we asked some additional questions on the pupil premium to provide further insights for this summit. Schools are positive about the premium, with 76% of teachers saying that it allows their school to target resources to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils to a great extent or to some extent. However, enthusiasm is stronger among primary than secondary teachers, with 37% of primary teachers saying it helps to ‘a great extent’ compared with 23% of secondary teachers.

Table 1: To what extent does the Pupil Premium Grant allow your school to: Target resources to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils?

	All	Primary	Secondary
	%	%	%
To a great extent	30	37	23
To some extent	46	44	48
To a little extent	10	8	13
Not at all	2	1	2
Don't know	11	9	14
No response	0	1	
N =	1478	761	717

When asked to what extent the pupil premium allows their school to raise attainment for pupils that are falling behind, primary teachers were again more enthusiastic than secondary teachers, but a clear majority of both said it did so to a great extent or some extent.

Table 2: To what extent does the Pupil Premium Grant allow your school to: Target resources to raise attainment for those pupils that are falling behind?

	All	Primary	Secondary
	%	%	%
To a great extent	21	26	16
To some extent	49	49	49
To a little extent	13	12	15
Not at all	3	2	4
Don't know	12	9	16
No response	1	1	1
N =	1478	761	717

However, many schools see the premium as supporting improved attainment for all pupils, with 55% of primary and 40% of secondary teachers saying that it ‘target[s] resources to raise attainment for all pupils to a great or some extent.’

Table 3: To what extent does the Pupil Premium Grant allow your school to: Target resources to raise attainment for all pupils?

	All	Primary	Secondary
	%	%	%
To a great extent	10	14	7
To some extent	37	41	33
To a little extent	26	24	29
Not at all	11	9	13
Don't know	14	11	17
No response	1	1	1
N =	1478	761	717

And a significant number of schools also feel that the premium is plugging funding gaps left by reductions in the schools budget caused by tighter national spending. 50% of primary teachers and 44% of secondary teachers say that the premium has enabled them to continue activities that would not otherwise happen due to funding pressures in other areas of the schools budget.

Table 4: To what extent does the Pupil Premium Grant allow your school to: Continue activities that would not otherwise happen due to funding pressures in other areas of the school budget?

	All	Primary	Secondary
	%	%	%
To a great extent	17	20	13
To some extent	30	30	31
To a little extent	19	20	19
Not at all	14	15	14
Don't know	18	14	23
No response	1	1	1
N =	1478	761	717

How well is the pupil premium being used?

Each year, we have asked teachers how the pupil premium is being spent in their schools. A clear favourite continues to be early intervention schemes, an answer given by 31% of schools and almost equally popular in primary and secondary schools. One-to-one tuition is chosen by one in six schools. A significant minority of schools use the funding to employ extra teachers or teaching assistants, but this is more common in primary than secondary schools. However, relatively few schools choose some of the best low cost proven approaches, according to the Sutton Trust/EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit, with only 4% citing improve feedback between teachers and pupils and 1% saying they use peer-to-peer tutoring.

Table 5: With the money received through the Pupil Premium, what is the main priority for extra spending at your school in 2014/2015?

	All	Primary	Secondary
	%	%	%
Reducing class sizes	3	3	3
Additional teaching assistants	10	14	5
Additional teachers	9	13	5
More one-to-one tuition	16	15	17
Peer-to-peer tutoring schemes for pupils	1	0	1
Improving feedback between teachers and pupils / providing more feedback that is effective	4	4	5
Early intervention schemes	31	32	30
Extending the breadth of the curriculum	2	3	1
Improving the classroom or school environment	1	1	1
Offsetting budget cuts elsewhere	2	1	3
Other	4	3	5
Don't know	17	11	22
None	0	0	0
No response	0		0
N =	1478	761	717

There have been changes over time in the responses teachers give to this question. There has been a decline in the number of teachers saying class size is a priority and, encouragingly, a drop in the proportion saying they 'don't know' (17% now compared to 28% in 2012). There has been a significant increase in the number of schools using the funding for early intervention schemes (up from 16% to 31%). There have also been small increases in the number of teachers saying premium funding goes towards improving feedback and one-to-one tuition.

Table 6: With the money received through the Pupil Premium, what is the main priority for extra spending at your school in 2014/2015 and 2011/12?

All teachers	2015	2012
Reducing class sizes	3	15
Additional teaching assistants	10	8
Additional teachers	9	5
More one-to-one tuition	16	10
Peer-to-peer tutoring schemes for pupils	1	0
Improving feedback between teachers and pupils / providing more feedback that is effective	4	2
Early intervention schemes	31	16
Extending the breadth of the curriculum	2	3
Improving the classroom or school environment	1	5
Offsetting budget cuts elsewhere	2	8
Other	4	1
Don't know	17	28
None	0	1
N =	1478	1676

What are the results?

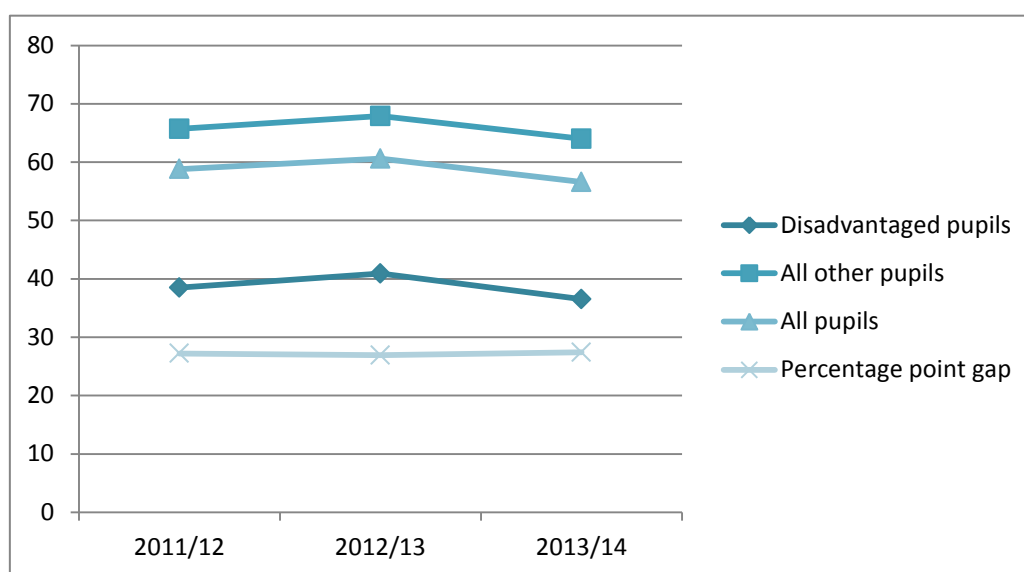
It may be too early to draw definitive conclusions on the effectiveness of the pupil premium, and there are challenges comparing data over time due to changes in how performance measures are calculated. But in the period when it has been available, there has been a narrowing of the gap in primary schools but as measured on the traditional five good GCSE measure and attainment at age 19, the gap has not narrowed significantly in secondary schools.⁹

⁹ The Department for Education notes that "In 2014 the proportion of pupils in both groups achieving this measure was lower than the two preceding years. This was affected by changes to how results are counted in performance measures, meaning

Table 7: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A*-C including GCSE English & mathematics¹⁰

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Disadvantaged pupils	38.5	40.9	36.5
All other pupils	65.7	67.9	64
All pupils	58.8	60.6	56.6
Percentage point gap	27.2	26.9	27.4

Figure 2: Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A*-C including GCSE English & mathematics



However, as Rebecca Allen discusses in her essay in this report, the government is developing a different way of measuring the impact on secondary schools which is closer to the measures likely to be used in the future to assess GCSE performance – the *Disadvantaged Pupils Attainment Gap Index* - based on a ‘*mean rank difference*’. The GCSE Index will be calculated by ranking all candidates on their English and Maths scores, and then taking an average of these. They will then compare the average rank between pupils eligible for free school meals, and those not. This value is then ‘*re-scaled*’ to a base of ten. Using this measure, the government calculates that the gap has narrowed by almost four per cent between 2012 and 2014.

Nevertheless, the evidence is that while the impact has been significant in individual schools, progress remains slow at a national level. With a spending review to come later in 2015, there is likely to be pressure on the premium to deliver more.

As it does so, there are a number of issues that we believe it needs to consider:

some qualifications no longer counted as GCSE equivalents, and only pupils’ first entries in English Baccalaureate subjects were counted.”

¹⁰ Department for Education, Measuring disadvantaged pupils’ attainment gaps over time (updated), January 2015

- how well evidence is used to inform spending;
- whether to continue providing the premium on the basis of FSM ever rather than other measures of disadvantage;
- whether there should be more systematic rewards built in than at present for schools that successfully improve results for disadvantaged pupils;
- how the needs of both low attainers and able pupils are recognised in the pupil premium;
- whether it is right to continue with a lower premium in secondary schools.

Getting these answers right can help ensure that that the pupil premium delivers better results for disadvantaged pupils in the coming years, while ensuring that it provides value for money to the government.

FROM BRIGHT SPOTS TO A BRIGHT SYSTEM

SIR KEVAN COLLINS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

The introduction of the pupil premium allowed us to get serious about addressing the scandal of poor outcomes for too many disadvantaged children.

Schools in every part of the country are leading the way and tackling the attainment gap head-on, improving results for their most disadvantaged pupils. But one of the biggest challenges we face is inconsistency: the variation between similar schools, serving all types of communities, is wide.

It's essential that we strive for a system which is reliable: where every child, of any background, can fulfil their potential and make the most of their talents.

Moving from bright spots to a system that delivers for all will be determined in a large part by the way we deal with autonomy, the extension of which has been one of the biggest changes in England since the 1980s. A head teacher in an English school today has a large degree of freedom over what is taught, how it is taught and how resources are allocated.

Understanding autonomy matters because it is a double-edged sword. It can drive innovation and enable schools to respond to the precise needs of its students and their families. It is understandably popular with school leaders, parents and policy-makers alike. But the dividing line between an autonomous school and an isolated one can be fine. Innovation only works at a system level if there is a mechanism to capture and share the knowledge that is generated.

At the Education Endowment Foundation, we believe that the key to unlocking autonomy's potential is evidence. If school leaders are able to use evidence to inform school improvement then autonomy can help achieve the goal of consistent excellence. Without evidence, the potential benefits of a school-led system may be lost.

The importance of evidence is greater today than ever before. In the last parliament, school funding was protected from wider public spending cuts. The future is undoubtedly going to get tougher and schools will no longer be able to put off difficult decisions. Without evidence, they will be even more challenging.

Evidence in practice

But what does using evidence mean in practice?

First, we should recognise that autonomy does not require every school to start with a blank sheet of paper. To create a successful school-led system we must support schools to spread the net wide and access to high-quality information about what others have tried in the past and what is going on today in other parts of the country.

When the EEF launched four years ago, few would have predicted there would be such an appetite within the system for evidence: both producing and consuming it. As testament to this, we now work with one in five of the country's schools to trial and evaluate cost-effective methods for raising the attainment of the most disadvantaged pupils. Since 2011 and

through 100 projects, we've helped more than 620,000 pupils in over 4,900 schools across England.

Our Teaching and Learning Toolkit developed in partnership with the Sutton Trust and Durham University, is a live resource that synthesises international evidence and the latest findings from EEF projects. The Toolkit is now used by half of all school leaders. But there are still too many schools disregarding the knowledge gained through the efforts of their peers. This is troubling, especially for schools with persistent attainment gaps.

The second step towards consistency is evaluation. Improving the status quo is difficult, and no approach will work in every classroom, which is why it is worth investing time and energy checking whether a new idea does create genuine improvement.

One of the most promising projects we've funded was an initiative delivered by the Calderdale Effectiveness Partnership that cost just over £50 per pupil. Designed to use self-regulation to improve writing skills, the project provided children with memorable experiences such as a trip to zoo, and gave them a structured approach to writing about it. Pupils made, on average, an additional nine months' progress; the impact on free school meals pupils was even greater, at 18 months.

To assess its impact as rigorously as possible, the evaluation was set up as a randomised controlled trial led by an independent evaluation team. We're now testing the project's effectiveness on a larger scale, working with 7,200 pupils in Leeds and Lincolnshire, and are hugely excited by its potential.

In addition to assessing an approach's impact on learning quantitatively, it's also important to try and work out the "why" and "how" questions that can be overlooked. In the case of Calderdale, it's unlikely the lions and tigers themselves that were the "active ingredients" that led to impact. Rather, the approach was about engaging pupils and teaching them how to plan, structure and self-evaluate accounts of their visit.

The final and most difficult step towards consistent excellence is making change stick. A school-led system requires courage and heads need both the nerve to try something new the confidence to resist the pressure to tinker with what is already working well. When an innovation appears to succeed it is a moment for celebration. But it is only when it is evaluated, embedded and reliably repeated that it truly makes a difference.

Impact on a larger scale

Finding effective ways to achieve impact on a larger scale is one of the obstacles we face in the drive to raise standards. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, we do need better systems in place for sharing and collaborating.

The EEF's "Families of Schools" database also aims to encourage schools to share their successes widely. Launched earlier this year, the tool groups similar schools together on factors including prior attainment, percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and the number of children who speak English as an additional language. For the first time, it allows schools to understand the size and nature of their attainment gap in relation to other similar institutions and to learn from the best-performing schools in their family.

To make a difference in the classroom, the details matter. To understand and implement something new requires time, professional development and, often, money. But we know that without paying attention to the details the effects seen in the early stages of an innovation are rarely replicated.

The history of education is strewn with plausible sounding ideas that turned out to be red herrings, or that worked wonders for a term before falling by the wayside. But putting in effort to evaluate and embed change is worth the effort. There is a great prize on offer: a consistent and school-led system providing better outcomes for our children.

THE TOOLKIT FOUR YEARS ON: LESSONS FOR SPENDING THE PUPIL PREMIUM

DR LEE ELLIOT MAJOR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SUTTON TRUST
PROFESSOR STEVE HIGGINS, DURHAM UNIVERSITY

It's the way you spend it

'It's not what you spend, it's the way that you spend it... that's what gets results'. This was one of the central messages that underpinned our first toolkit for schools, launched four years ago. The sentiments are even more pertinent today as the debate intensifies on how to deploy the annual £2.5 billion of pupil premium funds aimed at improving the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Earlier this year the latest national test results brought once again the humbling news that despite our best efforts the stark gap between the country's education haves and have-nots persists.

In many ways, the arguments over the government's flagship policy for social mobility echo those aired during the early days of the last parliament. Yet there is one striking difference: teachers and policy-makers are now talking about evidence. References to research on what has worked in the classroom now abound in a way that is unrecognisable to the discussions last time round. At the same time, schools are bracing themselves for a period of unprecedented upheaval and uncertainty as the landscape for assessment, accountability and attainment all undergo major reform yet again, while budgets get squeezed.

The birth and success of the toolkit

Five years ago a perfect storm of conditions enabled the toolkit to thrive. We produced the original 20-page *Pupil Premium Toolkit* as the Sutton Trust's response to the then coalition government's newly unveiled pupil premium. Our argument was simple: How the billions of pounds would actually be spent by schools would be critical to its success. Our concern was that the government's suggested priorities for the funding (reducing class sizes for example) were not grounded in robust evidence.

This *Which*-style guide summarised the world's education evidence about interventions offering teachers best bets of what has worked more effectively in schools together with the relative costs of each approach. This enabled schools to decide how to allocate funding. Unlike other research summaries, the aim was to create a genuinely accessible guide for teachers. We estimated the extra months gain in learning for pupils that approaches might lead to (if delivered well). Its launch in 2011 came at a time when schools in England were being plunged into a 'high autonomy high accountability' regime. The Government was reluctant to 'tell' schools how to spend the pupil premium money; the toolkit was the only independent guidance available.

But it wasn't until the Education Endowment Foundation was created that the 'Teaching and Learning Toolkit' was developed into the interactive website you see today, and which attracts over 20,000 hits each month. It has flourished under the brilliant 'toolkit team' at the EEF. There are now 34 categories with a wealth of material for teachers. The guide has been extended to the early years summarising evidence on the best bets for 3 and 4 year old children in early years settings. The EEF has commissioned over 100 trials to produce

evidence from English schools to feed into the toolkit – and has put evidence at the heart of our education debates.

Referred to by Ofsted as part of its efforts to scrutinise how the pupil premium was being used in schools, it is perhaps not surprising that the toolkit is now referenced on many schools' websites. A study published by the Department for Education found that over half (52%) of secondary schools and a third (33%) of primary schools had used the toolkit, echoing the findings of the NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus survey for the Sutton Trust described at the beginning of this report. We have even found that the toolkit approach has attracted interest from beyond the UK, and in 2015 an Australian version was launched.

Three enduring questions

For all these achievements, the same tensions we wrestled with when first producing the toolkit are still apparent four years on. They point to at least three enduring questions about how evidence can be used most effectively to maximise the impact of the premium. First, how do we communicate research findings in a simple accessible way without losing the nuances of the evidence? Second, how do we encourage teachers to embrace evidence without slipping into a compliance culture where being seen to do the right thing is more important than the real impact? Third, how do we ensure evidence-based practice helps disadvantaged children in particular?

Key to the toolkit's success was its simplicity. We were at pains to convert the complex findings of thousands of academic reviews into succinct headlines to make it easily digestible for teachers. This included a measure of average impact, cost and robustness of evidence for each teaching approach. Crucially, we translated average effect size into the number of extra months' progress a child would experience over a school year.

The price for this was some rather worrying misinterpretation of the research. One of the most noteworthy findings was that teaching assistants, on average, didn't have any measurable impact on pupils' progress. Some school heads took this finding at face value prompting them to question whether they should employ teaching assistants at all. In fact, a more thorough reading of the toolkit evidence pointed to the need for better deployment, preparation and management of the assistants.

Another more recent example concerns effective feedback which the toolkit found to be one of the best bets to improve pupil outcomes. An increased focus on feedback among school inspectors, partly prompted by this finding, however has led to an unhelpfully narrow focus on marking in schools, which is just one element of effective feedback.

So, one enduring lesson is to be vigilant against the unintended consequences of research headlines. Moreover, there is now a growing number of teachers who want to explore the findings in much finer detail and go below the toolkit's headlines. Teachers might now be categorised in three groups: evidence-seekers, compliance chasers and the disengaged. The challenge is to cater to all of them while recognising that, like any tool, our resource will be most useful when in the hands of professionals.

Our hope was that the toolkit would help to counterbalance the increasingly strong accountability measures for schools, which now look likely to intensify further. Empowering teachers to improve their practice without implementing top-down demands is a delicate

balancing act. We may now need to reconsider how to ensure schools use their pupil premium effectively and avoid shallow compliance. There is a concern that schools have used the toolkit to justify pupil premium spending retrospectively, not really as part of their decision making process at all.

Finally, but most importantly, the real measure of success must be whether the toolkit has helped to improve the attainment of our most disadvantaged children. This of course is the driving mission for the work of the EEF. But a growing danger, made ever more real in this time of tightened budgets, is that pupil premium money may be directed towards other priorities and away from children and young people who are educationally disadvantaged in our society. All the debates about evidence will be academic if they receive no spending at all.

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHETHER, WHERE AND WHY THE PUPIL PREMIUM GAP IS CLOSING?

DR REBECCA ALLEN, DIRECTOR, EDUCATION DATALAB

The coalition government of 2010-2015 invested enormous amounts of money and political capital in trying to close the attainment gap between children from low-income families, and everyone else. Schools are now required by Ofsted to monitor how far they are succeeding in closing their own gap. We want to know whether they are making progress towards this goal at a national level. However, measuring national and school pupil premium gaps is fraught with difficulties. It certainly needs to be done, but done with great care.

The gap is closing on some measures and not on others

At first glance, things do not seem to be getting much better: the headline gap between the proportion of pupils gaining five good GCSEs, including English and maths, for non-pupil premium and pupil premium children is barely closing (it was 26.4 and 26.2 percentage points in 2011 and 2014, respectively). However, this is a relatively poor measure for monitoring the gap since it ignores many improvements.

It is a threshold measure only capable of changing when a student successfully achieves a C grade instead of a D grade, and not if they achieve an E rather than F or indeed an A rather than a B grade. For many children, it is their grade in English or maths that prevents them achieving five or more A*-C, including English and maths. This means the school's performance in this threshold measure hangs on the performance of one maths and one English teacher, each teaching the C-D borderline ability set for their subject. Since some Pupil Premium children are very low attaining, it is very hard for a school to bring large numbers over the five or more A*-C threshold, even if they make very substantial improvements to teaching.

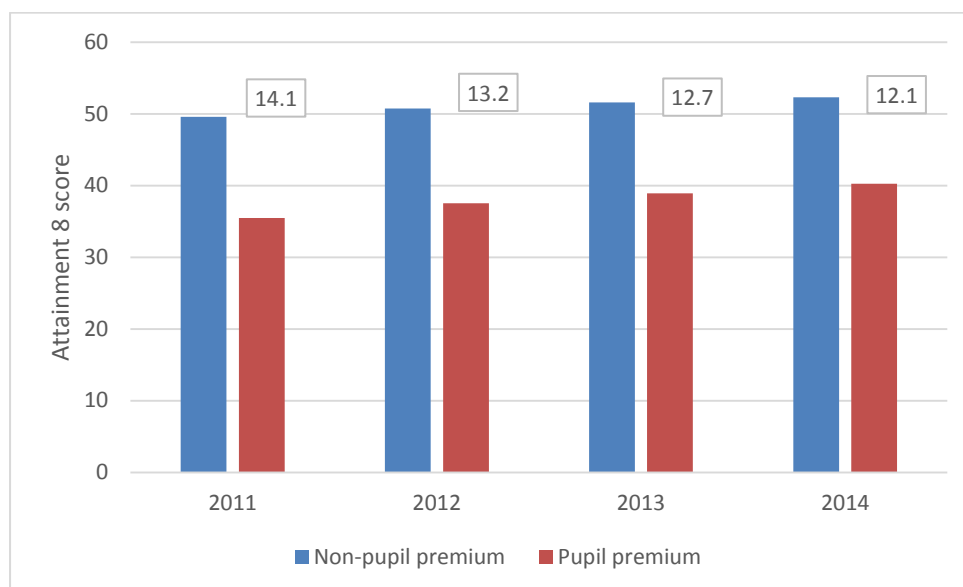
By contrast, on new accountability measures the gap is closing so fast that, if current trends continue, it will be zero by 2032! From 2016 onwards, school performance will be judged on pupil grades across eight subjects: English and maths, three subjects from science, computer science, history, geography and languages, plus any other three subjects. On this Attainment 8 measure, the gap has been narrowing fairly consistently each year. This gap has been closing particularly rapidly for children achieving a Level 4B or better in Key Stage Two tests at age 11.¹¹

Measuring the size of the pupil premium gap on this measure is more desirable because the grades of all pupils across a wide range of subjects contribute to Attainment 8 success, so it successfully identifies improvements even where they are happening for those pupils at the bottom - or top - of the attainment distribution. However, it is important to understand that Attainment 8 improves because grades improve and because subject entry mix has become better aligned with the more traditional academic subjects listed above. This change in subject entry mix is more pronounced for pupil premium children simply because this group were less likely to be following this type of curriculum in the past. The gap in the number of

¹¹ While level 4 is the 'expected standard' at Key Stage 2, Level 4B is a better predictor of the likelihood of achieving five good GCSEs.

Attainment 8 qualifying subjects has narrowed from 1.13 subjects in 2011 to 0.81 subjects in 2014. In fact, the pupil premium gap in entry patterns has now almost closed entirely for pupils with very high prior attainment.

Figure 3: The Attainment 8 pupil premium gap has been steadily falling



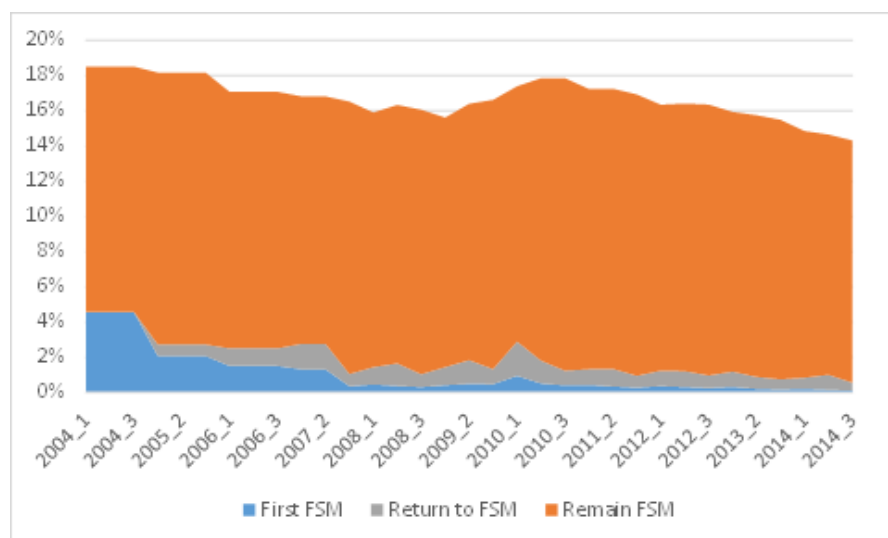
Eligibility for free school meals changes considerably by age and over time

Ideally we would want to assess the impact of the pupil premium on attainment gaps using a stable definition of educational disadvantage but eligibility for free school meals is far from stable. It is determined at any point in time by parental income and entitlement to out-of-work benefits. The list of eligible benefits grew considerably after 2001 and then shrunk under welfare reforms from 2011 onwards.

This bulging and then shrinking entitlement to benefits brings pupils into and out of the free school meals category that are likely to have quite different characteristics to those who have remained eligible under all definitions of the past decade. Furthermore, economic recessions bring a further group into the eligibility category who may be very different to those persistently not in work.

We see these patterns in the data when we track a single cohort born in 1997/8 from their time in reception through to age 16. A large number - 34% - experienced at least one spell of FSM recorded in the census.

Figure 4: Eligibility for free school meals rises in recessions, falls with benefit entitlement tightening and falls as children get older



The impact of the recession on eligibility is very visible in the data on the chart. More significantly, FSM eligibility falls as children get older simply because their family's benefits entitlement declines and parents are better able to access work with older children in the house. This has significant implications for how we monitor the gap at different stages of education. If those who remain on free school meals in secondary schools are from the families who are most disconnected with the labour market, we may find secondary school pupil premium gaps are largest here even with significant earlier interventions to modify the gap.

Concentrate on better results for pupil premium children, rather than narrowing the gap

Free school meals children are clearly different from one another, but they vary far less than the group who are not eligible for free school meals, since this group includes both those with bankers and cleaners as parents. And it is important to note that many non-FSM pupils come from lower income households than FSM pupils. (Hobbs and Vignoles¹² estimate that only around one-quarter to one-half of FSM pupils are in the lowest income households in 2004/5.) This is principally because the very act of receiving means-tested benefits and tax credits pushes children eligible for FSM up the household income distribution.

It is the diverse nature of the non-FSM pupils across England that means that is more difficult than we might think to compare pupil premium gaps across schools. A school may substantially narrow the gap by working hard to improve the attainment of their most deprived children, or through the accident of the characteristics of their ineligible children. Many schools have always had pupil premium gaps close to zero because their non-claiming pupils are no different in their social or educational background to their pupil premium children.

¹² Hobbs, G. and Vignoles, A. (2010) Is children's free school meal 'eligibility' a good proxy for family income? *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(4).

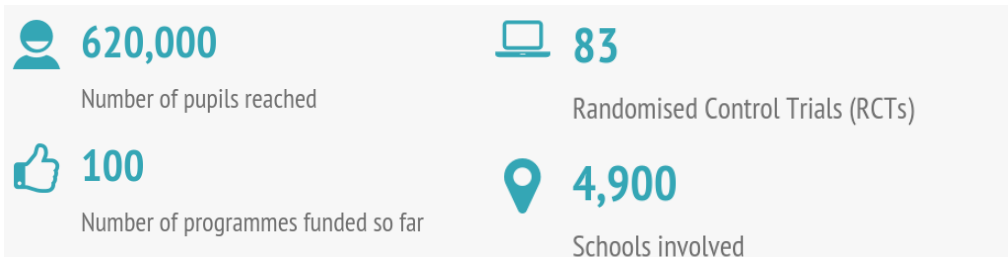
So, although it is gaps in achievement that contribute to social class inequalities and should be the national benchmark to assessing policy success, it is better for schools to concentrate their focus on the attainment of their FSM pupils rather than the size of their own pupil premium gap. The size of pupil premium gaps across schools can be compared across schools with similar demographic profiles, as is used in the Education Endowment Foundation's Families of Schools tool.

What matters to children from low-income families is that a school enables them to achieve a qualification to get on in life. If a low-income student gets a poor education from a school, it is little consolation or use for them to learn that the school served the higher income students equally poorly (the school's 'gap' was small).

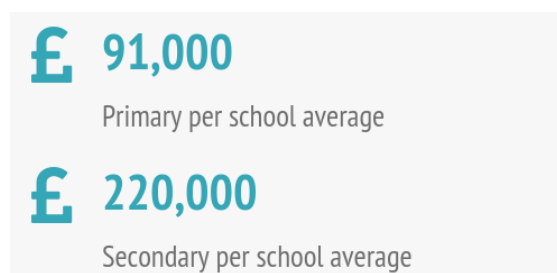
As it turns out, great schools tend to be great schools for all children in the school – the statistical correlation between who does well for FSM children and who does well for non-FSM children is very high. Moreover, schools can make a difference to the life chances of FSM children – there are huge differences in attainment for these children across schools, far larger than there are for children from wealthy backgrounds who do pretty well in all schools.

PUPIL PREMIUM – FAST FACTS

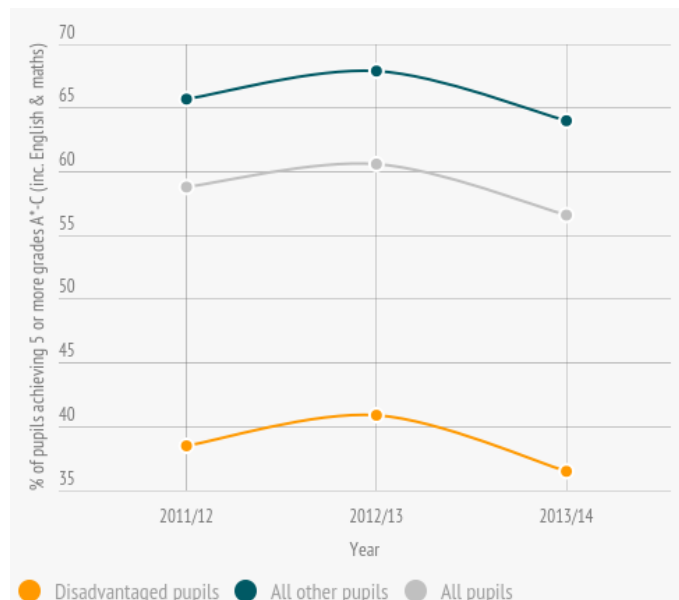
EEF RESEARCH STATISTICS



AVERAGE PUPIL PREMIUM ALLOCATION¹³



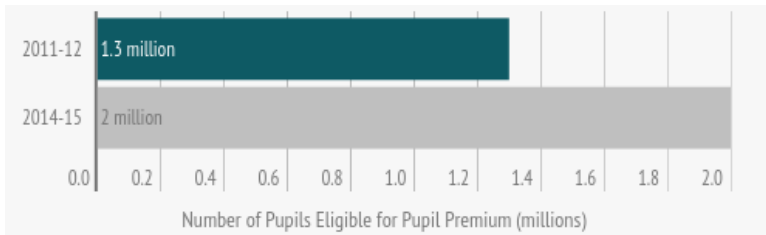
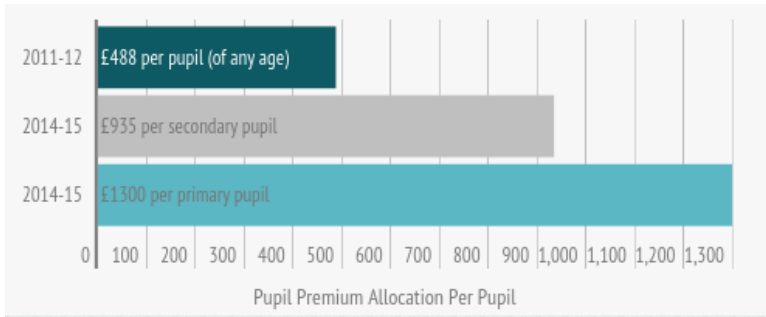
THE ATTAINMENT GAP BY PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS ACHIEVING 5 OR MORE GRADES A*-C INCLUDING GCSE ENGLISH & MATHEMATICS¹⁵



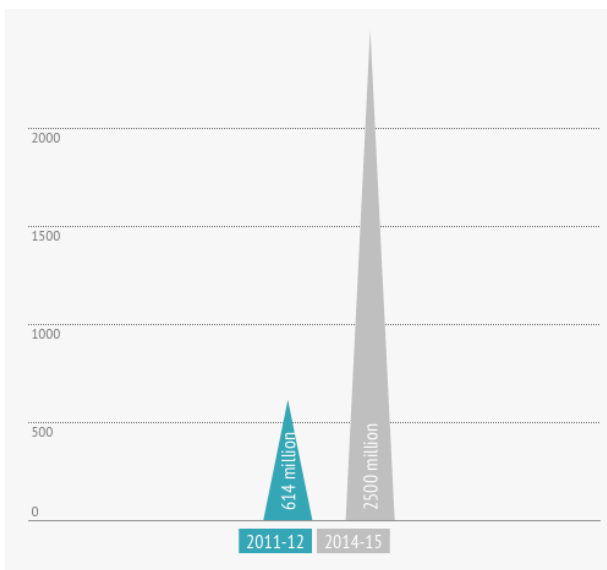
¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-2014-to-2015-final-allocations>

¹⁵ In 2014 the proportion of pupils in both groups achieving this measure was lower than the two preceding years. This was affected by changes to how results are counted in performance measures, meaning some qualifications no longer counted as GCSE equivalents, and only pupils' first entries in English Baccalaureate subjects were counted. Source: DfE analysis

NUMBER OF PUPIL PREMIUM ELIGIBLE PUPILS¹⁶



AMOUNT SPENT ON PUPIL PREMIUM TO DATE¹⁷



ABOUT THE SUTTON TRUST AND EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION



THE SUTTON TRUST

The Sutton Trust, a UK-based foundation set up by Sir Peter Lampl in 1997, is dedicated to improving social mobility through education. The Trust has funded and evaluated programmes that have helped hundreds of thousands of young people from low and middle income homes across all ages. It has published over 150 research studies that have had a profound impact on national education policy in Britain and received prominent coverage in the national news media.

As well as being a think tank, the Sutton Trust is a 'do-tank'. The Trust identifies and develops programmes to help non-privileged children, undertakes independent and robust evaluations, and scales up successful programmes, often on a national scale, attracting state funding. The Trust's work is highly cost-effective. An independent study by the Boston Consulting Group found that, on average, the Trust's programmes generate a return to beneficiaries of £15 for every pound invested, a figure that does not include the wider benefits to society.

www.suttontrust.com



THE EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an independent grant-making charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement, ensuring that children from all backgrounds can fulfil their potential and make the most of their talents.

We aim to raise the attainment of children facing disadvantage by:

- Identifying and funding promising educational innovations that address the needs of disadvantaged children in primary and secondary schools in England;
- Evaluating these innovations to extend and secure the evidence on what works and can be made to work at scale;
- Encouraging schools, government, charities, and others to apply evidence and adopt innovations found to be effective.

We share evidence by providing independent and accessible information through the Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit, summarising educational research from the UK and around the world. This Toolkit provides guidance for teachers and schools on how best to use their resources to improve the attainment of pupils. All EEF-funded projects are independently and rigorously evaluated and the results will be integrated into our Toolkit.

www.educationendowmentfoundation.com

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Sir Peter Lampl



Sir Peter is acknowledged to be the UK's leading educational philanthropist. He founded the Sutton Trust in 1997 to improve social mobility through education and remains the Trust's chairman.

He is also chairman of the Education Endowment Foundation set up in 2011 by the Sutton Trust with support from Impetus Trust funded by an endowment of £135 million from the Government to improve the performance of the poorest children in the worst performing schools.

Before establishing the Sutton Trust, Peter was the founder and chairman of the Sutton Company, a Private Equity firm with offices in New York, London and Munich.

Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP



The Rt Hon Nicky Morgan was appointed Education Secretary and Minister for Women and Equalities on 15 July 2014. She has been Conservative MP for Loughborough since 2010.

Nicky has served as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Rt Hon David Willetts MP, Cabinet Minister at the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, and before that was a member of the BIS Select Committee. She served as an

Assistant Whip in the coalition government, until her appointment as Economic Secretary to the Treasury on 7 October 2013. She was appointed as Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Minister for Women on 9 April 2014.

David Hall



David is a trustee of the Education Endowment Foundation and a governor of Swanlea School in Tower Hamlets. He is a member of the boards of Vestra wealth managers and of Ricardo plc, and an advisory director of Campbell Lutyens. David was a member of the executive committee of the Boston Consulting Group and chairman of BCG's ten worldwide practice groups. He was the founder-leader of the financial services practice of BCG. David was chairman of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) from 2006 to 2012 and is a former non-executive director of C. Hoare & Co. He was awarded CBE for services to financial services, for his chairmanship of the FSCS.

Brian Lightman



Brian Lightman became General Secretary of ASCL on 1 September 2010. He served as president of the association in 2007-08.

Brian was educated at Westminster City School and the University of Southampton where he graduated with a BA (Hons) in German. He also has an MA in Education from the Open University. He taught modern foreign languages for 16 years in three comprehensive schools in the South East of England before becoming headteacher of Llantwit Major School in 1995 and then headteacher of St Cyres School, a large, mixed 11-18

comprehensive in Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan, from 1999-2010. Brian is acknowledged as an authority on the English and Welsh education systems. Brian is a Patron of the National Citizen Service and serves on the boards of the Careers and Enterprise company and the PiXLEdge charity.

Dame Sharon Hollows



Charter Academy has standards that are amongst the highest in the country, with 83% of students achieving the gold standard of 5 A* - Cs including English and maths in 2014. This made Charter the most improved secondary school in the country. Behaviour is excellent and the academy is oversubscribed.

Charter doesn't serve an affluent community. The catchment area is one of the poorest in the country. 62% of the students receive pupil premium. In 2009 when the Academy converted, only 23 students were expected to start year 7.

In 2015 Charter was awarded the National Pupil Premium Award in recognition of their outstanding provision for disadvantaged students. Dame Sharon previously led the most improved primary school in the country.

Russell Hobby



Russell Hobby was born and raised in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, attending St Nicholas CE Primary and John Mason Secondary School. He studied philosophy, politics and economics at Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

In 1998, he joined the management consultancy Hay Group. Within a year of joining, Russell was working on education projects, including research into teacher effectiveness for the then DfES. This was the start of his strong association with issues of leadership and management in schools. In 2000, he helped to set up Transforming Learning – a 'dot com' business unit dedicated to collecting pupil feedback on classroom climate via the internet. Transforming Learning was used in over 2000 schools. In 2003 he founded Hay Group's education practice, leading a team of consultants working directly with leadership teams in hundreds of schools of every phase, size and location, as well as government agencies.

Taking up the post as General Secretary of the NAHT, in September 2010, has given him the opportunity to campaign directly for the conditions that enable people to be great leaders in our schools.

Clare de Sausmarez



Clare is Headteacher at the Federation of Belle Vue Infant and Newport Junior Schools in Hampshire. Earlier in 2015 her school won a Pupil Premium Award in the Infant and Key Stage 3 category. The school introduced effective strategies to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, resulting in sustained improvement in raising their attainment. In particular, the school invested in one-to-one activities as well as a summer club where small groups received extra support in reading, writing and maths. Parents of pupil premium pupils were invited into the school to discuss their child's education and learning, and parent play sessions have also engaged fathers, who were previously hard to reach. Clare began her teaching career in Inner London. She has been teaching for 27 years and has been a Headteacher for 15 years.

Sir John Dunford



John is the government's National Pupil Premium Champion, an independent role in which he works part-time with schools and local authorities on the effective use of pupil premium funding to raise the educational achievement of disadvantaged pupils, reporting back to the Department for Education on issues raised by school leaders and teachers. John is chair of Whole Education and the charity Worldwide Volunteering. He carries out educational consultancy for a range of organisations and is a governor of St Andrew's CofE Primary School in his home village in Leicestershire.

Sir Michael Wilshaw



Sir Michael was appointed Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills on 1 January 2012.

Prior to joining Ofsted, Sir Michael had a distinguished career as a teacher for 43 years, 26 of these as a headteacher in London secondary schools, and most recently as Executive Principal at Mossbourne Community Academy in Hackney. In addition to leading Mossbourne Community Academy, Sir Michael was Director of Education for ARK, a charitable education trust running a number of academies across England.

Sir Kevan Collins



Kevan has worked in public service for over twenty-five years and became the first EEF Chief Executive in October 2011, having previously been Chief Executive in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Prior to this role he led a distinguished career in education – starting off as a primary school teacher, leading the Primary Literacy Strategy as National Director, and then serving as Director of Children's Services at Tower Hamlets. Kevan also gained international experience working in Mozambique and supporting the development of a national literacy initiative in the USA. He completed his doctorate focusing on literacy development at Leeds University in 2005.

Lee Elliot Major



Lee is Chief Executive of the Trust and leads on our development work. He oversaw the trust's research work from 2006-2012.

He is a trustee of the Education Endowment Foundation, and chairs its evaluation advisory board. He has served on a number of Government advisory bodies on social mobility and education. He is an adviser to the Office for Fair Access, and sits on the Social Mobility Transparency Board. He commissioned and is a co-author of the Sutton Trust-EEF toolkit for schools. He was previously an education journalist, working for the Guardian and Times Higher Education Supplement.

Steve Higgins



Steve Higgins is Professor of Education at Durham University.

Steve joined the School of Education in September 2006 from Newcastle University, where he was the founding Director of the Research Centre for Learning and Teaching. Before working in higher education he taught in primary schools in the North East where his interest in children's thinking and learning developed.

He is one of the authors of the Sutton Trust/EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit and has given more than thirty keynote presentations and talks on using research evidence to support more effective spending in schools to policy and practitioner audiences based on this work. He has an interest in developing understanding of effective use of research evidence for policy and practice.

Becky Allen



Rebecca Allen is Director of Education Datalab, on leave from her academic position as Reader in Economics of Education at UCL Institute of Education. She is an expert in the analysis of large scale administrative and survey datasets, including the National Pupil Database and School Workforce Census. Her research interests include school accountability, measuring performance, pupil admissions and teacher labour markets. She has experience of leading and delivering large research projects that have been funded by Government, research councils, educational foundations and charities. Rebecca is co-organiser of the PLASC/NPD User Group, a member of the researchED Advisory Panel, the Sutton Trust Research Advisory Group, the ARK Mathematics Mastery Development Board and Teach First Impact Advisory Group.

Tim Leunig



Tim Leunig is Chief Scientific Adviser and Chief Analyst at the Department for Education. He is also Associate Professor of Economic History at the London School of Economics.

He holds a PhD in economics, and has written widely on current and historical economic issues. He is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, the Royal Statistical Society, and the Royal Society of Arts.

John Tomsett



John Tomsett has been a teacher for 27 years and a Headteacher for twelve. He is Headteacher at Huntington School, York. He writes a blog called "This much I know..." and is a co-founder of the Headteachers' Roundtable Think Tank. His first book is called, "Love over Fear, This much I know about growing truly great teaching." He remains resolutely wedded to teaching and helping colleagues improve their teaching.

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