Social Policy in a Cold Climate

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The Coalition's Record on Schools: Policy, Spending and Outcomes 2010-2015

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Summary

In May 2010, David Cameron and Nick Clegg committed the Coalition to sweeping school reforms, promising *"a breaking open of the state monopoly".* They also pledged to protect school spending and give extra money to the education of the poorest pupils.

- The Coalition did protect school spending. Total expenditure rose from £46.1bn in 2009/10 to £46.6bn in 2013/14 (in real terms in 2009/10 prices) – a rise of one per cent. This allowed pupil-teacher and pupil-adult ratios to be maintained. But capital spending fell by 57 per cent.
- The Pupil Premium has directed more money to schools with poor intakes. Secondary schools with the highest proportions of pupils from low income families gained an extra 4.3 per cent funding in 2012/13 than in 2009/10, while the least deprived schools lost 2.5 per cent. All types of primary schools gained, especially the most deprived.
- The Coalition has broken up local authority oversight of the state school system. By 2014, 57 per cent of secondary schools and one in ten primary schools were Academies.
- There is no clear evidence to date that Academies are either better or worse than the schools they replaced. Ways of managing the new fragmented system are still evolving and will be a key challenge for the next government.
- Other reforms have included changes to curriculum and assessment to make them more demanding. Teacher training has been reformed to emphasise school-led, 'on-the-job' training.
- Results from primary school testing and GCSE exams continued to rise until 2013. However in 2014 GCSE attainment fell, and socio-economic gaps opened up for lower attainers.

The next government will inherit a school system in flux and key issues of equity and achievement still unresolved.

1. Introduction

This is one of a series of papers examining aspects of the social policy record of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition in England from 2010-15, with a particular focus on poverty, inequality and the distribution of social and economic outcomes.

The papers follow a similar but smaller set covering Labour's record from 1997-2010, published in 2013. They follow the same format as those papers. Starting with a brief assessment of the situation the Coalition inherited from Labour, they move to a description of the Coalition's aims and the policies enacted. They then describe trends in spending, and an account of what was bought with the money expended (inputs and outputs). Finally, they turn to outcomes, and a discussion of the relationship between policies, spending and outcomes, so far as this can be discerned.

All the papers focus on UK policy where policy is not devolved (for example taxes and benefits) and English policy where it is. This paper is mainly about England. Key differences with other UK nations are highlighted, but a full four country comparison is beyond the scope of the study.

This paper focuses on policies towards education in primary and secondary schools up to the age of 16. Pre-school education is covered in a parallel paper (Stewart and Obolenskaya 2015), as are post-16 education whether in schools or colleges, higher education and adult skills training (Lupton, Unwin, and Thomson 2015). The latter covers 'A' Levels as part of the 16-19 phase.

Throughout, we concentrate primarily on socio-economic inequalities, rather on inequalities between students of different genders, ethnic origins, and learning needs. This is not to imply that these other inequalities are unimportant nor that they are unconnected with socio-economic inequality. The increasing attainment of some minority ethnic groups, for example, is a crucial element in the patterns we describe here. These 'intersectionalities' are more fully explored in analysis elsewhere in the programme by Hills et al. (forthcoming) which breaks down trends in economic outcomes by the main 'equality groups' covered by the 2010 Equality Act.

2. The Coalition's Inheritance

The Coalition inherited a school system that had seen substantial investment under Labour. From a historic low point, Labour increased spending on education from 4.5 per cent to 6.2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Extra spending went into teaching and support staff - 48,000 more full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers (11.9 per cent) in England and 133,000 more FTE teaching assistants than in 1997. Pupil to teacher ratios fell both in primary and secondary schools (from 23:1 to 21:1 in primary and 17:1 to 16:1 in secondary), as did class sizes (from 28 to 26 in primary and 22 to 21 in secondary). Outside mainstream classes, the increase in support staff, and the roll out of extended schools meant many children benefited from extra small group tuition, mentoring, before- and after-school clubs and family support. There were major investments in teacher training and development, including leadership development and school-to-school collaboration, as well as improvements to teachers' pay and conditions. The House of Commons Select Committee concluded in 2010 that England had some of the best qualified and best trained teachers ever (Whitty 2014).

Funding became more redistributive towards more disadvantaged schools, with numerous targeted initiatives to raise achievement in such schools (Chowdry and Sibieta 2011a). Labour's Academies programme and its major capital programme, Building Schools for the Future, were both targeted towards the poorest areas. School buildings and educational achievement in such neighbourhoods improved.

GCSE attainment overall increased. By 2010, 76 per cent of English pupils were achieving five good GCSEs (A*-C) or equivalent, compared with 45 per cent in 1997. From 2005, the government also started to monitor the numbers achieving five such grades including English and maths. This rose from 44 per cent in 2005/6 to 54.8 per cent in 2009/10. At the same time, socio-economic inequality in education also decreased, with the gap between pupils receiving free school meals (FSM) and other pupils in obtaining five good GCSEs or equivalent narrowing from 30.7 (in 2003, when this started to be measured) to 20.2 percentage points in 2010). Some progress, though much less, was also made at 5 A*-C including English and maths (the gap falling from 28.1 per cent in 2006 to 27.6 in 2010).

However, there were people on both sides of the political spectrum dissatisfied with Labour's record. There was a general consensus that socio-economic gaps were still too wide. The UK had comparatively high socio-economic inequality in international student assessments (Jerrim 2012b). Blanden and Macmillan (2013) have also demonstrated that inequalities at higher levels of attainment, for example being in the highest attaining fifth of pupils at GCSE level, did not reduce, suggesting that more privileged groups have maintained their advantage as the bar generally has been raised. The proportion of young people aged 16-18 who were not in education, employment and training (NEET) also failed to reduce on Labour's watch, even before the recession, indicating that a persistent minority of young people remained disaffected with school, achieving little and facing very poor post-school prospects.

In terms of the system more generally, many argued against what they saw as the narrowing of educational objectives to attainment in standard tests, and the quasi-marketisation of the school

system. On the latter point, the evidence was rather mixed, with no consistent evidence either that school competition had raised attainment (Allen and Burgess 2010) nor that they led, across the board, to greater socio-economic segregation (Cheng and Gorard 2010). On the former point, a considerable body of educational research (see West 2010 for a review) has provided evidence of the disengagement of lower attaining pupils, prioritisation of pupils at grade boundaries, loss of curriculum breadth and teaching to the test that has come with an increasing emphasis on school league table performance. On the other hand Burgess (2010) showed that Labour's persistence with school league tables accounted for an extra 1.92 GCSE grades per year for pupils in England compared with those in Wales where league tables were abolished.

Prior to, and after, the 2010 election, the Conservatives made a great deal of 'evidence' of Britain's declining performance relative to other countries and the need to "*reverse this trend in order to improve social mobility and to equip our school leavers to compete with their peers across the world*"(DfE 2011c) and to learn from high performing school systems. They suggested that extra spending has not resulted in better performance by international comparison, and that standards had suffered as a result of 'easier exams' and vocational equivalence[1]. More rigorous analysis of the international data suggested that there was no evidence either of decline or improvement relative to other countries, and some evidence of improvement in socio-economic inequalities amongst lower attainers (Jerrim 2012a; Smithers 2013). In 2012, the Chair of the UK Statistics Authority wrote to the Secretary of State expressing concern about the conclusions that were being drawn from the statistics and urged a more careful interpretation.[2] Nevertheless, Britain occupied a mid-table position among OECD countries in the 2009 PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) tests, with similar scores to other comparable European countries, and it was the case that the improvements seen in domestic examinations had not been reflected in the international assessments over the same period. This discrepancy alone lent some weight to the suggestion of 'grade inflation', and the idea that poorer students in particular were increasingly being offered 'easier' vocational qualifications because their schools had low overall scores (e.g. Wrigley and Kalambouka 2012). Such qualifications also typically generate a lower return in the labour market than traditional GCSEs (Dearden, McGrananhan, and Sianesi 2004).

Finally, the overall fiscal context following the global financial crisis was a major part of the situation the Coalition inherited. Whichever party had won the election in 2010, it was likely that schools spending would not rise as fast as in recent years. Indeed Labour's manifesto in 2010 said exactly that (Labour Party 2010, 3:2). As far as schools were concerned, any fiscal retrenchment deemed necessary would also have to be achieved in the context of increasing demographic pressures, with pupil numbers beginning to rise after declining steadily since the turn of the century.

[1] There is not space here to review this point in full but see Tymms (2004) for a discussion of primary school standards during this period, Heath et al. (2013) on GCSE attainment and data quality and Coe (2007) on GCSE and A-level attainment compared with other, standardised test results.
[2] https://fullfact.org/articles/statistics_watchdog_education_international_school_league_table-28392

3. Aims

Much of the Coalition's response to the situation they inherited can be understood from the foreword to the Coalition Agreement (Cabinet Office 2010) where its agenda of "freedom, fairness and responsibility" (title page) was set out. Fairness was articulated in terms of social mobility: *"where everyone, regardless of background, has the chance to rise as high as their talents and ambition allow them*" (p7) and freedom and responsibility in the ambition for "a *stronger society, a smaller state, and power and responsibility in the hands of every citizen*" (p8).

To pave the way for social mobility, David Cameron and Nick Clegg agreed to "*sweeping reform of welfare, taxes, and most of all our schools*" (p7, emphasis added), with *" a breaking open of the state monopoly and extra money following the poorest pupils so that they, at last, get to go to the best schools, not the worst".*

A further, more specific set of aims for schools was set out later in the Coalition agreement:

> "*The Government believes that we need to reform our school system to tackle educational inequality, which has widened in recent years*[3]*, and to give greater powers to parents and pupils to choose a good school. We want to ensure high standards of discipline in the classroom, robust standards and the highest quality teaching. We also believe that the state should help parents, community groups and others come together to improve the education system by starting new schools*"(Cabinet Office 2010, p 28)

In terms of outcomes, this statement reflects commitments both to higher standards and lower educational inequality, later configured in the Department for Education (DfE)'s business plan as *"a highly educated society in which opportunity is equal for children and young people, no matter what their background or family circumstances"* (DfE 2011c). Notably these were also the aims set out in the Labour manifesto: "*educational excellence for every child, whatever their background or circumstances*" or "*to raise standards, promote excellence and narrow achievement gaps*" (Labour Party 2010, p 3:2), indicating a high degree of political consensus on this issue.

The Coalition statement also incorporates aims for system reform – greater powers for parents and pupils and the ability for parents, community groups and others to set up new schools. It is clear that the Coalition parties believed that this breaking up of the state monopoly would lead specifically to better educational outcomes (social mobility, fairness), but these measures are also set out also as means to freedom and responsibility. They reflect a particular ideology of the welfare state which also found expression in aims for health, employment programmes, prisons and other areas, not just education.

Documentary analysis of the manifestos of the two Coalition parties, compared with the Coalition Agreement, suggests that the majority of these aims were shared between the parties at least in broad terms (see Box 1). The parties agreed on a pupil premium, on teacher training, tackling bullying and improving discipline, improving SEN provision, reforming league tables and allowing a wider range of school providers.

However there were also significant differences between the two parties, as shown in Box 1 and 2 and Appendix 1), principally around curriculum and assessment. While the Liberal Democrat manifesto pledged to establish an independent Educational Standards Authority, slim back the

[3] A claim not supported by the evidence (see Lupton and Obolenskaya 2013).

National Curriculum and reduce testing at Key Stage 2, and create a General Diploma to bring GCSEs, A levels and high quality vocational qualifications together, the Conservatives proposed making tests at Key Stage 2 more rigorous, introducing a reading test at age 6, making the National Curriculum more challenging, and making exams more robust. In the face of these opposing pledges, The Coalition's programme for government included nothing on curriculum or assessment except the pledge to create more flexibility in the system to enable state schools to offer qualifications like the international (I)GCSE. No Liberal Democrat manifesto pledges on schools that were not also mirrored in the Conservative manifesto appeared in the Coalition's programme for government.

Box 1: The Coalition Agreement: Commitments on Schools

Commitments included in the Coalition agreement. Shared policies are underlined.

- ensure new providers can enter state system in response to parental demand (give parents, teachers, charities and local communities the chance to set up new schools)
- ensure that all schools have greater freedom over the curriculum
- ensure that all schools are held properly to account
- fund a significant premium for disadvantaged pupils from outside the schools budget
- support Teach First[4], create Teach Now, and seek other ways to improve the quality of the teaching profession
- reform the existing pay and conditions to give schools greater freedoms to pay good teachers more
- help schools tackle bullying, especially homophobic bullying
- simplify regulation of standards and target inspection on areas of failure
- give anonymity to teachers accused by pupils
- seek to attract more top science and maths graduates to be teachers
- publish performance data on educational providers, and past exam papers
- create more flexibility in the exam system so that state schools can offer qualifications like the IGCSE
- reform league tables to show progress of children of all abilities
- give heads and teachers the powers they need to ensure discipline
- improve diagnostic assessment, prevent unnecessary closure of special schools and remove the bias towards inclusion
- improve the quality of vocational education, including increasing flexibility for 14-19 year olds and creating new Technical Academies
- keep external assessment but review Key Stage 2 Tests
- Ensure that all new Academies follow an inclusive admissions policy

[4] A programme by which high achieving graduates are recruited into teaching in disadvantaged schools for two years at the start of their careers.

Box 2: Manifesto Commitments not included in the Coalition Agreement

Conservative:

- Promote systematic synthetic phonics
- Reading test at age 6
- National Curriculum more challenging
- Organise primary curriculum around subjects
- Encourage setting
- Make Key Stage 2 tests more rigorous
- Make other exams more robust
- Make sure Academies retain freedom

Liberal Democrat:

- School energy efficiency
- Education Standards Authority
- Axe National Curriculum, replace with slimmer 'entitlement'
- Scale back KS2 tests
- Introduce a General Diploma to bring GCSEs, A Levels and high quality vocational qualifications together

4. Policies

The Coalition's policy programme for schools was in large part set out in its 2010 White Paper: The Importance of Teaching (DfE 2010b), which became law as the Education Act 2011. A further green paper (DfE 2011b) signalled the direction of policy on special educational needs and disability, later incorporated in the Children and Families Act 2014.

Four main policy areas featured in this programme. Three of these corresponded to the plans set out in the Coalition Agreement: **reform of the school system**; **reforms to the teaching profession**; and policies specifically designed to **tackle educational inequality**. The fourth area, a set of far-reaching **reforms to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment**, was not trailed in the Coalition Agreement. It follows Conservative manifesto pledges at the expense of those advocated by the Liberal Democrats.

We describe these policy areas below. We also summarise the main policies in Box 3 and in a timeline. Some were enacted very quickly, while others only came into effect late in the Coalition's term in office and others still are scheduled to be implemented during the lifetime of the next parliament – an important point when attempting to trace the relationships between policies and educational outcomes.

Box 3: Summary of Coalition's Main Policies

The School System

- expansion of Academies programme
- introduction of Free Schools, University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools
- announcement of intention to move to national formula for school funding, and existing system simplified to reduce local variation
- abolition of Labour's Building Schools for the Future programme: replacement with smaller targeted basic need programme
- wider range of school performance measures
- slimming down of inspection criteria, but tougher regime – 'satisfactory' category changed to 'requires improvement'
- some Local Authority duties removed. Regional Commissioners appointed to oversee Academies

The Teaching Profession

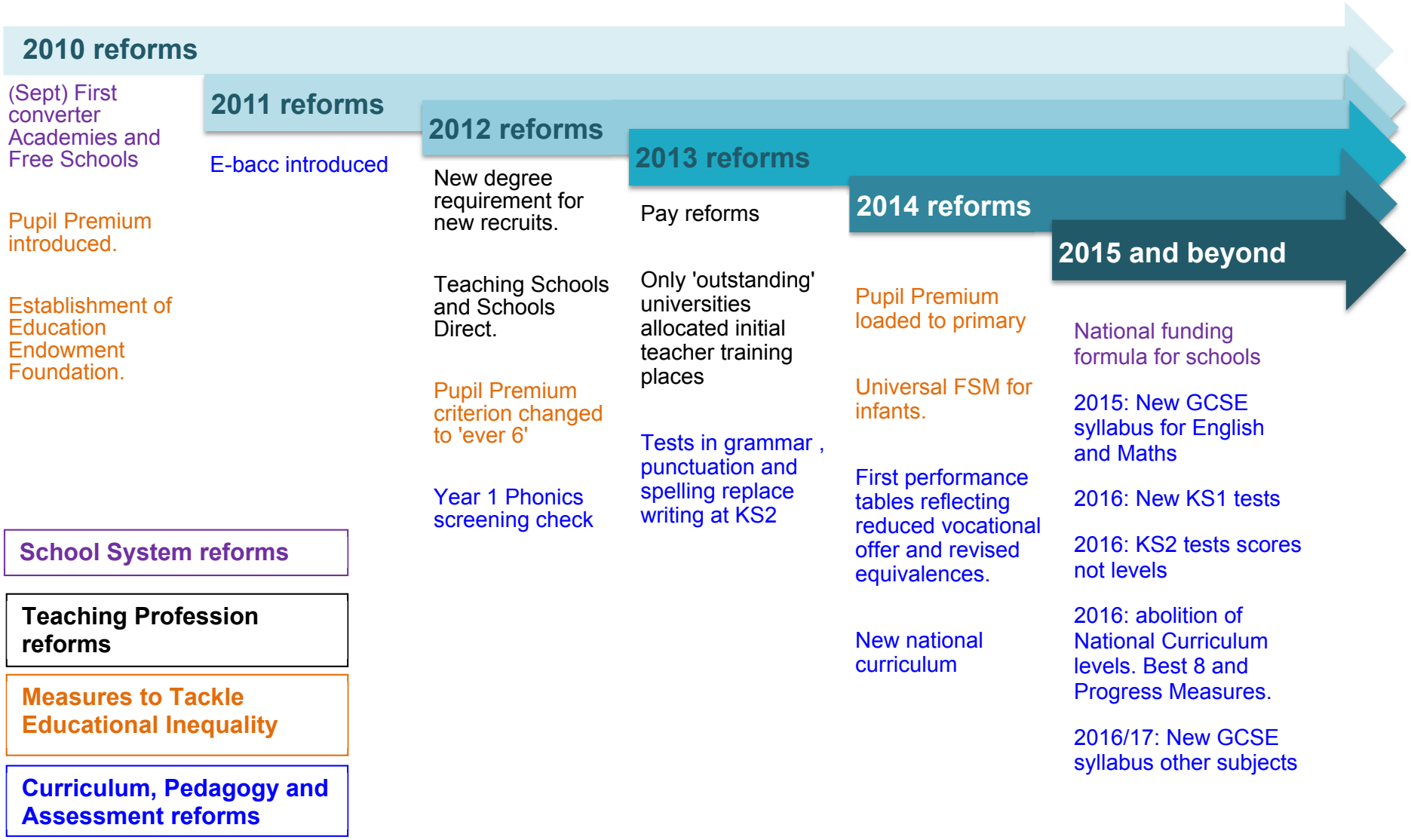
- Academies and Free schools enabled to employ unqualified teachers
- Major expansion of schools role in initial teacher training (ITT), and smaller overall role for universities. Bigger role for schools in teacher professional development.
- Reform of teachers' pay and conditions including performance pay and freedom for heads to vary pay and conditions locally.

Educational Inequality

- Abolition of existing school and area-based programmes e.g. narrowing the gap, extended schools.
- Introduction of 'Pupil Premium' – extra funding for disadvantaged pupils
- Ofsted to inspect on free school meal gap, and this to be included in performance tables
- Education Endowment Foundation set up to identify 'what works;

Curriculum Pedagogy and Assessment

- Major changes to curriculum at primary and secondary level: more traditional and more demanding content.
- Major reform of assessment to make it 'more challenging': includes removal of 'tiers' for some subjects; removal of modules; only first attempt at exam to count in school performance tables


2010 reforms
(Sept) First converter Academies and Free Schools
Pupil Premium introduced.
Establishment of Education Endowment Foundation.
2011 reforms
E-bacc introduced
2012 reforms
New degree requirement for new recruits.
Teaching Schools and Schools Direct.
Pupil Premium criterion changed to 'ever 6'
Year 1 Phonics screening check
2013 reforms
Pay reforms
Only 'outstanding' universities allocated initial teacher training places
Tests in grammar , punctuation and spelling replace writing at KS2
2014 reforms
Pupil Premium loaded to primary
Universal FSM for infants.
First performance tables reflecting reduced vocational offer and revised equivalences.
New national curriculum
2015 and beyond
National funding formula for schools
2015: New GCSE syllabus for English and Maths
2016: New KS1 tests
2016: KS2 tests scores not levels
2016: abolition of National Curriculum levels. Best 8 and Progress Measures.
2016/17: New GCSE syllabus other subjects
School System reforms
Teaching Profession reforms
Measures to Tackle Educational Inequality
Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment reforms

School System Reform

Academies and Free Schools

Although its schools White Paper was entitled "The Importance of Teaching", probably the most substantial element of the Coalition's programme to date has been its structural reforms of the school system.

The largest change has been the extension of the Academies programme. Academies (independent state-funded secondary schools) were established under the last Labour government in 2002. Labour's programme was targeted at raising attainment in deprived areas by replacing poorly performing schools. This programme was highly controversial (see for example Beckett 2007; Gunter 2012), although there was some evidence that the programme worked in terms of raising achievement (Machin and Vernoit 2011). However, it was relatively modest in scale, relating only to secondary schools, and establishing only 203 Academies by 2010.

In May 2010, the Coalition announced that all types of school would be able to seek Academy status, including primary and special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) which had not previously been eligible. While Labour's Academies only sought to replace struggling schools in disadvantaged areas, the Coalition's Academies represented whole system change. The principle behind these changes was that giving all schools greater autonomy (freedom not to follow the National curriculum, to vary term dates and the length of the school day, flexibility over staff pay and conditions and greater budgetary control) would enable innovation and thus drive up standards and reduce gaps between rich and poor (DfE 2010a).

The Academies Act 2010 and Education Act 2011 gave the DfE powers to require maintained schools that are 'eligible for intervention' to become academies or be closed, and introduced a presumption that any new school would be an Academy not a maintained school. The Acts also gave existing state schools the option to voluntarily convert to academy status. Outstanding schools could initially be fast tracked, thus shifting the focus firmly away from the poorest areas[5] and this criterion was quickly widened to 'good with outstanding features' (in November 2010) and then to "performing well" (in April 2011). Those not meeting these criteria could still convert but only as part of a chain or with a suitable sponsor (NAO 2012).

The number of Academy schools thus now includes both 'sponsored academies' – ones which were replaced underperforming schools – and 'converter academies' – existing schools which transferred to Academy status.

Also introduced for the first time (and technically counted as Academies) were:

- Free Schools - new schools set up by parents, teachers, charities, universities, business, community or faith groups in response to parental demand.
- Studio schools – small secondary academies sponsored by local employers, open all year round and offering a mixed academic and vocational curriculum.
- University Technical Colleges (UTCs)– schools run with the help of employers and universities and offering technical and science education for 14-19 year olds

[5] Such schools were expected to support a weaker school in return, although no accountability mechanism was established to ensure that this happened.

All these schools are required to comply with the admissions code, although they act as their own admissions authority. Free schools, UTCs and Studio Schools can choose to be outside the local coordination of admissions in their first year only.

Many commentators, both in support and against, have emphasised the scale of the government's ambitions for school system transformation. West and Bailey (2013: p138) have described it as *"the school-based education system in England changing radically from a national system locally administered via democratically elected local education authorities to a centrally controlled system with Secretary of State having legally binding contractual arrangements with an increasing number of private education providers. The speed and extent of what is in essence a form of privatisation – the transfer of responsibility from the public sector to actors outside it - has been remarkable*". However, arguably the transformation of the system has happened more quickly than the government expected. Its initial financial calculations assumed a conversion rate of 200 per year, but around 1300 schools had converted after the first two years.

School Funding

Academisation has been accompanied by a series of changes to the school funding system. The Coalition's goal is to move to a simpler national funding formula rather than the current system in which local authorities determine how to allocate money between schools based on a bespoke range of criteria and Academies receive the equivalent amount of money direct from the Education Funding Agency (EFA), an arm of DfE. The government has argued that the current system is unfair, since schools in apparently similar circumstances receive different amounts per head. It also criticised the lack of transparency of the system, which makes it difficult for potential new providers to plan and budget.

Reforms to date have seen gradually greater restrictions on the number and type of criteria that local authorities can use to determine school allocations, with a greater use of pupil-led factors, as well as the introduction of the nationally determined 'Pupil Premium' proposed in both manifestos (see section on tackling inequality for more detail). Local authorities have also been required to delegate all the money they receive for schools (through the Direct Schools Grant) to schools with a very few exceptions (high needs pupils and early years; historical commitments; equal back-pay; and the funding of non-SEN places in independent schools). All these reforms have the effect of ensuring that a greater proportion of a school's budget is determined by the number and characteristics of students, and that variation between schools is reduced – principles that were also at the heart of Labour's school funding reforms in 2006.

The schools capital funding system has also been reformed, following the Coalition's cancellation (in July 2010) of Labour's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, and the James (2011) review of education capital, which the new government commissioned. Although a relatively small part of the overall education budget, this represented a significant change in policy. BSF had proposed a total replacement, over 15-20 years, of the entire secondary school stock, starting first with schools in the most disadvantaged areas. Its ambitions went beyond physical improvements. Proposals for new BSF schools had to demonstrate not just newer, better designed, more sustainable buildings, but the ways in which these buildings would enable innovative high quality

teaching and learning, raise standards, be accessible to local communities and be founded on extensive local collaboration and parental involvement. Mahony and Hextall (2013) argue that BSF was designed on the principles of transformation, redistribution, regeneration and participation. Whether these ambitions could be met in reality was open to dispute. Woolner et al. (2007) suggest that there is little evidence of direct effects of school buildings on attainment but that changing the school environment could kick start school improvement more generally.

By 2010, it was evident that the machinery put in place for the delivery of BSF was expensive and overcomplicated. Targets were not being met and costs had risen (NAO 2009). Concerns about value for money led the Coalition to cancel the programme abruptly, leaving 715 projects which were in various stages of planning. Its new programme took up the James recommendations that capital allocation should be determined based on the need for pupil places (a Targeted Basic Need Programme) and on the condition of the local estate (a Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP) and launched in July 2011. This marked a change towards concentrating on the state of the buildings rather than seeing school capital spending as a route to achieving redistributive goals. Local authorities were invited to bid for funding for repairs, and also for new schools (which could only be academies) or to expand existing schools where there was a demand for places. To support this, DfE tasked the EFA with a new Property Data Survey Programme (PDSP) to look at the state of the capital stock, which finished in 2014. The first school re-built through PSBP reopened in May 2014.

It is also worth noting that the introduction of new technologies was hit by this change. BSF funded the upgrading of technology in new and in some existing schools. As well the abolition of BSF, the Coalition also abolished Becta, the agency leading on the promotion and integration of ICT in schools.

School Accountability

We also include under 'school system reform' changes to the inspection regime and school performance measures. These have perhaps attracted less attention and debate than the wholesale reform of the school system, but may be more important in shaping schools' day-to- day priorities.

One change has been a broadening of the suite of measures of school performance, to include: progress and attainment across a suite of eight subjects (with 'Attainment 8' and 'Progress 8' to be introduced from 2016) the E-Bacc (see later); the proportion of students achieving at least a C grade in English and maths, and progress in these subjects; performance compared with similar schools; and a breakdown of the performance of students with low, middle and high prior attainment and eligible for the pupil premium. At the same time, 'floor standards' have also been raised – for primary schools to least 60 per cent of pupils at the end of KS2 achieving a level four or above in both English and mathematics (raised from 55 per cent), and for secondary schools to at least 40 per cent of pupils at the end of KS4 achieving five or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or equivalent, including both English and maths.

The school inspection system has been slimmed down, with outstanding schools exempt from routine inspection and the work of Ofsted more tightly focused, through a new framework, on four core areas: pupil achievement, the quality of teaching, leadership and management, and the behaviour and safety of pupils. Instead of being required to inspect 29 different elements of schools, inspectors now just had to look at four. Baxter and Clarke (2013) describe this as one of the biggest

shifts in the inspection process since the inception of Ofsted in 1992. However, almost immediately thereafter it was also made tougher. From 2012, Ofsted scrapped its 'satisfactory' rating, meaning that all schools not rated as outstanding or good would be deemed to 'require improvement'. Schools in this category are inspected more frequently than previously (12-18 months rather than three years) and put into special measures if not reaching a 'good' standard within three years.

As schools have increasingly moved out of local authority control, an unresolved area of policy is what role local authorities should play in the school system. The 2011 Education Act removed some LA duties (for example the need to appoint School Improvement Partners). It appeared to envisage a narrower role for local authorities in terms of ensuring sufficient high quality places, coordinating admissions and supporting vulnerable children. Local authorities representative bodies have continued to make their case to be a new 'middle tier', perhaps with less responsibility than previously for school improvement but a more strategic role including oversight of academies (Thraves, Fowler, and Carr-West 2012). Early in December 2013 the Secretary of State advertised for eight regional schools commissioners to oversee academies and free schools, including making decisions on academy applications and taking action on underperforming academies (Vaughan, 2013). These commisioners have no oversight of local authority schools.

Reforms to the Teaching Profession

Alongside its structural changes to the school system, the Coalition has also implemented a programme of reform to the way teachers are recruited, trained, supported and developed. An early move was an announcement that anyone starting teacher training from 2012 would in general have to hold at least a second class degree, and the desire to recruit good graduates into teaching was reflected in an expansion of Labour's Teach First programme, including in primary schools for the first time. Teach First recruits, who are deployed in disadvantaged areas and must make a two year commitment, must have a 2:1 degree from a 'good university'. Somewhat contradictorily, however, the government also introduced, in 2013, a new 'Troops to Teachers' scheme, open to those without degrees. To date this has been very small, with only 102 people trained through this route by summer 2014[6].

More fundamentally, the Coalition has reduced the role of universities in teacher training, putting schools in an increasingly large role. Since 2012, maintained schools and Academies have been able to apply to become Teaching Schools, which can provide Initial Teacher Training (ITT), through a new programme: School Direct. Under School Direct, participating schools recruit and select their own trainees with the expectation that they will go on to work within the school (or federation). The majority will put their trainees through the traditional Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) programme while based in school, but there is also a salaried option through which teachers are employed as unqualified teachers while being trained by the school, which can become an accredited ITT provider in its own right. The traditional PGCE also remains, although the government requires universities to have extensive school involvement in their programmes. From 2013, only higher education institutions rated 'outstanding' have guaranteed core allocations of teacher training

[6] http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/aug/05/troops-to-teachers-not-putting-ex-soldiers-in-classrooms

places – the rest must compete through School Direct or choose to stop offering teacher training altogether (Morgan 2014).

All these changes seem to place a high emphasis on the importance of high quality training, albeit a version which emphasises 'craft knowledge' and downplays the importance of research-based and disciplinary knowledge. However, Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges have been given the freedom to employ unqualified teachers. Whitty (2014) suggests that both of these policies can both be seen as arising from a perceived need to rid the system of the influence of the educational establishment.

Changes to the arrangements for Continuing Professional Development (CPD), leadership training and development, and support for school improvement have also been made. In particular, the 'National Strategies' professional development programme run by DfE has been discontinued, and the role of schools and leading professionals increased. The Coalition set out plans to expand the number of National and Local Leaders of Education (experienced headteachers who support other schools) – from 400 NLEs in 2010 to 1000 in 2014-5, and from 1400 to 2000 LLEs over the same period. As of November 2014, there were 937 NLEs and 1610 LLEs,. Teaching schools (of which there were 600 by 2014) are also expected to lead professional development including providing support to other schools and to designate and broker 'specialist leaders of education' and engage in research and development.

The government has also introduced changes to teachers pay and conditions from 2013, ending teachers' automatic year-on-year pay rises and the national pay structure, giving heads freedom over pay and conditions, including performance-related pay based on annual appraisal. These changes, along with longer de facto working hours and changes to pensions, resulted in teachers taking industrial action during 2014.

Tackling Educational Inequality

A third main policy area has been addressing educational inequality. As was the case under the last Labour government, this has been done partly through targeted elements of broader policies. For example, the expansion of Teach First brought increasing numbers of good graduates into schools in poorer areas. A 25 per cent additional bursary is provided for School Direct trainees working in schools with more than 35 per cent Free School Meal (FSM). Studio schools and University Technical Colleges are likely to attract young people disengaged from a more academic curriculum. Floor targets tend to have the effect of targeting schools efforts at lower-attaining children. The introduction of universal free school meals for infants (from 2014) is also more likely to have educational benefits for children from less advantaged homes (Kitchen et al. 2013). The new inspection framework requires Ofsted to consider how well schools provide for different groups of pupils including boys and girls, minority ethnic groups, children with disabilities and those eligible for Free School Meals, and from 2013 Ofsted announced that it would be re-inspecting 'outstanding' schools where the attainment of children on FSM is deemed too low. From 2011, school performance tables have included indicators of attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils and the gap between their attainment and others.

With effect from 2010/11, the Coalition also introduced the 'Pupil Premium', a per capita grant to schools and Academies for pupils eligible for FSM, to be spent directly on raising the attainment of those pupils. The Pupil Premium started at £430 per pupil and the amounts have increased each year. From 2014/15 the premium is loaded in favour of primary schools, £1300 for primary and £935 for secondary. From 2012/13, the criteria changed to include all pupils who had been eligible for FSM at any time in the last six years. There are separate premia for children who are looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed services. The DfE has also used part of the total Pupil Premium funding to set up summer schools for disadvantaged pupils transferring to secondary school.

The Pupil Premium focuses attention narrowly on pupils eligible for Free School Meals, rather than on educational or socio-economic disadvantage more broadly. It also reflects the Coalition's intention that schools, rather than central government, should decide how to use resources best close attainment gaps. At the same time as the Pupil Premium was introduced, a range of existing central government programmes including the 'narrowing the gap' elements of the national strategies, education/health partnerships, start-up costs for extended schools, and other area-based programmes were discontinued. The government set up a new charity, the Education Endowment Foundation, to build up and disseminate knowledge of interventions that have been demonstrated, through rigorous evaluation, to have been successful, as a resource for school leaders.

It is also interesting to note that the Pupil Premium as implemented appears to vary in intent and design from the policy trailed in the party manifestos and Coalition Agreement (see earlier) which aimed to ensure that poorer children were educated in the best schools (Coalition agreement) or that they were in smaller classes (Lib Dem. Manifesto). An independent evaluation conducted during 2012/13 suggested that schools were using considerable discretion with the extra money: compensating for losses of other funding to continue to provide support that had previously been in place, and targeting it on the basis of educational need rather than strictly Pupil Premium eligibility (Carpenter et al. 2013), and this was also reflected in Ofsted's first report on the issue (based on a survey of headteachers) in 2012, which found that only one in 10 had significantly changed the way they supported pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (Ofsted 2012). A subsequent report by Ofsted heavily criticised school-wide approaches and called for the money to be specifically targeted on the eligible pupils (Ofsted 2013). By September 2014, Ofsted was reporting that more schools were using the funding 'well', i.e. targeting it on the eligible pupils. The most frequent use of the funding was to pay for additional staff (teachers and teaching assistants) to deliver one-to-one or small group tuition. Secondary schools were more likely to employ additional teachers and primary schools to employ teaching assistants. Additional staffing was allowing schools to offer a range of interventions including booster classes, reading support, raising aspiration programmes or to reduce class sizes. Secondary schools were frequently engaging 'learning mentors' while in primary schools, funding was sometimes used for specialist support on pupils' language and communication skills. Support for after-school, weekend and holiday sessions and to enable educational visits was another common use of the money (Ofsted 2014a).

Other papers in this series deal with other Coalition policies that might be expected to influence educational inequality – for example welfare reform (and its effects on child poverty), employment, housing, neighbourhood regeneration, and cuts to local government services such as libraries and Sure Start provision, so we do not include these policies here. We note here that the Pupil Premium has been a conspicuous and well-funded effort to combat the effects of economic disadvantage at a

time when other state-provided supports to low income families have been reduced. In this sense, the responsibility for ensuring more equal outcomes has shifted more firmly in the direction of schools.

Two other policies pertain to wider inequalities rather than socio- economic inequality. In 2010, the Coalition passed into law Labour's Equality Act, making it unlawful for schools to discriminate on grounds of sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, and introducing a new Public Sector Equality Duty requiring schools to, among other things, publish their equality objectives. In 2012, fewer than one quarter were doing so. A research report by Race on the Agenda (ROTA) and NASUWT in 2014 showed that Free Schools, particularly, have a 'poorer level of compliance' than other school types with the Equality Act's statutory duty to publish equality objectives (Stokes 2014). The government has also initiated a substantial reform of provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities as part of the Children and Families Act 2014, with effect from September 2014. This integrates assessment of educational needs with those of health and care, introduces direct payments (personal budgets), allows parents to express a preference for any state-funded school and encourages the development of more specialised Free Schools and Academies.

Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment

Lastly there have been major reforms to what is taught in schools and how it is assessed. Policies have been motivated by a belief that standards are too low, both by comparison with other nations (DfE 2010b) , and as a preparation for life after school (DfE 2014b). The Wolf Review of vocational education (Wolf 2011), commissioned by DfE, was particularly critical of vocational 'equivalents' at GCSE, arguing that they were not equipping young people for Level 3 courses nor were they regarded as valuable by employers. Further down the age range, the government has argued that the "*single most important outcome for any primary school is to give as many pupils as possible the knowledge and skills to flourish in the later phases of education*", and that current expectations in primary schools are too low (DfE 2014a).

Changes have been proposed or implemented at all levels from age 5 to 18. For the youngest age, a baseline measure in reception year will be introduced in 2016 to replace the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. In primary schools, a new test (a phonics screening check) was introduced in 2012 for children at the end of Year 1, and from 2013, failure to reach the required standard in this test has triggered extra support and a re-test at the end of Year 2. More broadly, a new primary curriculum is being taught from 2014. This includes more demanding content in maths, science and literacy, the addition of languages at Key Stage 2, and an emphasis on learning about key figures in British history. Assessment at KS2 has also been reformed following the Bew Review (Bew 2011). A first step was to change the KS2 English assessment from 2013, removing external assessment of writing and introducing a new Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS) Test. From 2014, reading assessments have involved passages of increasing difficulty and more questions, and use of calculators has been removed from KS2 maths. From 2016, pupils at KS2 will no longer be given 'levels' but will receive a scaled score where 100 represents the expected standard level' (which 85 per cent of pupils are expected to meet).

A new national curriculum for secondary schools (also designed to be more precise and challenging) was also introduced from 2014. In addition, GCSEs have been comprehensively reformed, both in

content and form, to make them 'more challenging' (DfE 2014b). The mode of assessment has been changed from a modular system to one of assessment at the end of the course, and with examinations as the default mode. Most subjects will be untiered, and marked on a new scale from 1 to 9. Subject content has also been changed, with the intention of making the exams more demanding and requiring students to demonstrate competence in reading and writing at length and in mathematical skills. Following the Wolf Review, the number of qualifications that count towards school performance tables was significantly reduced, and there were changes to the way that they were counted: each qualification should only count for one GCSE, and a cap was introduced on the contribution that non GCSE qualifications could made to a student's overall points score.

Some of these changes have already been made. In particular, students sitting GCSE Science in summer 2012 were the first to encounter more demanding syllabuses, and those taking exams in summer 2013 also faced revised qualifications in single science subjects. From 2014, speaking and listening assessments were no longer counted in GCSE English grades, and a stronger weight was given to written exams over controlled assessments. In English literature, history, geography and religious studies exams, marks were awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students starting GCSEs in September 2012 and completing them in 2014 were the first to take new linear qualifications, with reduced coursework and assessment at the end of the course, and during the course of their GCSE studies, the Secretary of State also announced that only one attempt at the exams would be counted in league tables (for English, maths, modern languages, history, geography and the sciences with other subjects to follow). As we discuss later, this had an immediate deterrent effect on the practice of 'early entry' in November 2013. The 'Wolf' changes to performance tables come into effect in 2014.

However, the major overhaul of programmes will not take effect until after the next election, with the new programmes being taught from 2015 (English and maths), 2016 (other larger subjects) and 2017 (all other subjects).

An additional performance measure, the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) – a combination of GCSEs at A*-C grades in English, mathematics, two sciences, a foreign language and history or geography, was introduced for schools in 2011. One change not introduced was the proposed 'EBacc certificate', initially proposed as a replacement for the GCSE. The certificates, which pupils were due to start taking in 2015/16, were not implemented due to significant opposition from the Liberal Democrats (Paton 2013).

The curriculum and assessment changes have been controversial, with particular concerns they that they would be less accessible for disadvantaged children. A group of one hundred academics has publicly argued that the latter could lead to early demoralisation, and to difficulty for children in relating abstract ideas to their own experiences and lives, as well as failing to develop the skills that will be needed in the labour market (The Independent 2013). Children from poorer homes have also, in recent years, relied more on vocational subjects to reach GCSE expected levels (House of Commons Education Committee 2014). The government's response to such concerns is that the 'dumbing down' of curriculum and assessment does not benefit disadvantaged children, and that they have not been well served by taking qualifications which have had little or no labour market value. Whether the changes prove to be more equitable will rest, therefore, on schools' ability to engage students with the new curriculum and support their learning towards the new forms of assessment.

On the whole the Coalition government has emphasised that it wants to give more autonomy to teachers over how to teach, rejecting what was seen by many as Labour's excessive direction of lesson content and structure. One important move in this direction is the abolition, from 2016, of the National Curriculum 'levels' (markers of expected progress) which have tended to dominate teachers' formative assessment over the last decade. However, there are exceptions, notably the emphasis that has been given to synthetic phonics as the preferred method for teaching reading, reflected in the new Teacher's Standards and the new phonics screening test.

A strong emphasis has been placed on improving behaviour in schools, through the new Ofsted framework, the appointment of a behaviour advisor and changes to the legislation to extend school's powers to search and confiscate items, and to use reasonable force. Here, too, the government has stated that it wants to increase schools' freedoms to deal with non-compliant behaviour – and has released them from the requirement to give notice of detention or be part of a behaviour and attendance partnership, but has also issued a checklist for teachers on classroom management.

A Policy Overview

Before moving on to look at the effects of these policies, we offer some brief summary observations on the programme as a whole.

It is clear that the government set out to achieve rapid and substantial structural change. This was a radical reform programme, not an austerity programme. At the same time it pushed through a programme of radical curriculum and assessment reform which was not trailed in its programme for government. This will largely impact after 2015, but will make a substantial difference to what is taught and learned in schools through to 2020 at least. In line with these changes, the Coalition has moved, in an unadvertised way, to a tight definition of education and the role of central government. Its change in the departmental name from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DSCF) to the Department for Education (DfE), signalled a narrowing of intent which was accompanied by the dropping of policies relating to wider children's well-being (notably Every Child Matters), much multi-agency and area-based working (although areas must still have multi-agency Local Safeguarding Children Boards), and a focus on marginalised groups which had developed in the former DCSF since 2007.

There are elements of continuity with the policies of the previous government, in the emphasis on school choice and diversity, accountability through league tables, a widening range of providers, and a simplified funding regime. Indeed Labour's 2006 Education and Inspections Act arguably paved the way for the Coalition's structural reforms (Lupton 2011). However, the scale of structural reform is significantly different from anything Labour imagined, and the changes to curriculum and assessment mark a clear departure from the direction of policy in the latter part of the Labour period.

The direction of reform has also taken England's education system further from that of Scotland and Wales. In these nations, comprehensive school systems remain in place. Curriculum divergence is particularly pronounced now in relation to Scotland where the Curriculum for Excellence, which has "*almost complete consensus across the political spectrum*" (Paterson 2014: p107), is founded on child-centred principles, co-constructed with teachers, and aims not to prescribe knowledge but

to develop capacities of '*successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors'* (Scottish Government 2008).

The Coalition's approach to education has also been rather distinctive in relation to its wider social policy agenda. The structural changes bear strong similarities with other areas in terms of their 'privatising' or 'voluntarising' goals, but they represent a particular view of localism: both a 'hyper-localism' in the devolution of autonomy to individual schools and a 'hyper-centralism' in the diminution of the role of local authorities and the taking up of greater powers by the Secretary of State. These developments are somewhat at odds with other developments which see increasing powers given to 'larger than LA' city regional governments and less to central government.

A final point to note is that until mid-2014, the reform programme was carried out by the Secretary of State in a style of confrontation with the 'educational establishment' – teacher unions, academics and researchers. This dispute, widely reported in the press, reached its peak in 2013 when a group of one hundred academics wrote to the Independent newspaper arguing against the proposed curriculum reforms, and the Secretary of State responded in the Daily Mail refusing "to surrender to the Marxist teachers hell-bent on destroying our schools".. the "new Enemies of Promise.. a set of politically-motivated individuals who have been actively trying to prevent millions of our poorest children getting the education they need" (Gove 2013). During 2013, all four major teaching unions passed votes of no confidence in Mr Gove's policies and the National Association of Head Teachers condemned the climate of 'bullying, fear and intimidation' they claimed he had created. Some commentators[7] argued that Mr Gove's confrontational style and unpopularity with the teaching unions was a factor in his removal from his position in the 2014 Cabinet reshuffle (e.g. Watt and Wintour 2014). In this respect, also, 2010-2015 has been a remarkable period of policy which has altered the landscape upon which future governments will need to act.

[7] For example, the BBC http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-28302487 and The Guardian

5. Spending

To set a broader context for schools spending in England, we note first overall education spending in the UK, including nursery, higher and further education as well as schools. This fell £3.6 billion (4 per cent) in real terms between 2009/10 and 2013/14. The average annual growth rate was -1.7 per cent over the period, although with a large fall in spending in 2011-12 being compensated for somewhat by an increase in spending 2013-2014. We show this in Table 1, giving the trend under Labour since 1997/8 for context.

Table 1: Overall Education Spending, 1997-98 to 2013/14

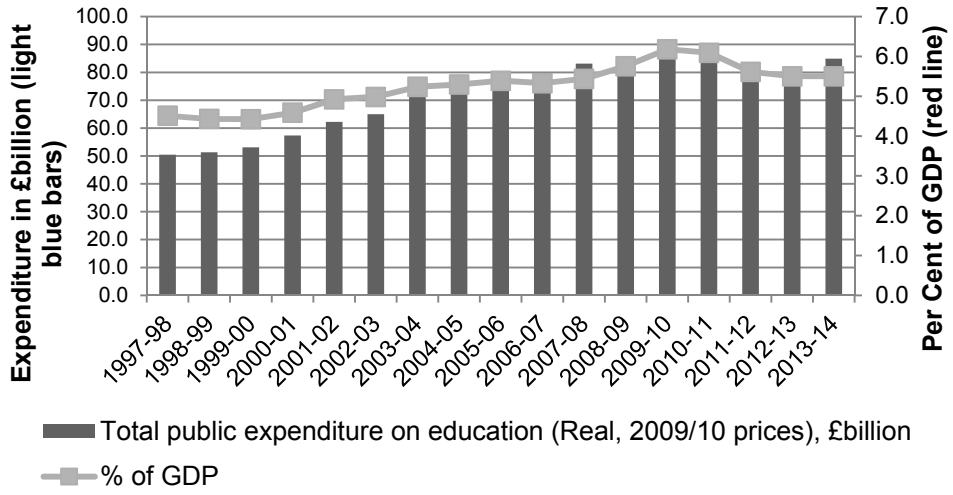
Years	Political period	Total public expenditure on education (nominal), £billion (1)	Total public expenditure on education (Real, 2009/10 prices), £billion (2)	% GDP	Annual growth in real expenditure (per cent)	Average annual growth (geometric mean)
1997-98	Blair (1)	38.6	50.5	4.5	3.2	4.1
1998-99		40	51.3	4.4	1.7	
1999-00		42.2	53.1	4.4	3.5	
2000-01		45.9	57.3	4.6	8.0	
2001-02	Blair (2)	51.2	62.3	4.9	8.6	6.5
2002-03		54.7	65.0	5.0	4.4	
2003-04		61	71.1	5.2	9.4	
2004-05		65.1	73.9	5.3	3.9	
2005-06	Blair (3)	69.8	77.8	5.4	5.3	3.5
2006-07		73	79.1	5.3	1.7	
2007-08	Brown	78.7	83.1	5.4	5.2	3.8
2008-09		83	85.3	5.8	2.6	
2009-10		88.5	88.5	6.2	3.8	
2010-11	Cameron	91.5	89.2	6.1	0.8	-1.7
2011-12		86.9	82.8	5.6	-7.2	
2012-13		87	81.4	5.5	-1.6	
2013-14		90.2	82.8	5.5	4.3	

Source: HM Treasury Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA)(2014)

Notes: Includes all education functions: nursery, primary and secondary schools, further and higher education, central administration and inspection and local authority services, and student support. Adjusted to 2009/10 prices using Dec 2013 HMT deflators. England accounts for 83 per cent of UK education expenditure identifiable by country.

As a share of the national economy, education spending was down from its high point of 6.2 per cent in 2009/10, to 5.5 per cent by 2013/14. As we pointed out in our review of the Labour period, the spike in education spending as a percentage of GDP between 2007/8 and 2009/10 was as much to do with the fall in GDP as the rise in real terms spending. The Coalition's spending programme has effectively returned spending as a proportion of GDP to its pre-crash level (see Figure 1). International comparative data are not yet available for this period. In 2009, spending at this level placed the UK 14th out of 30 OECD countries on public expenditure on education: a mid-table spender.

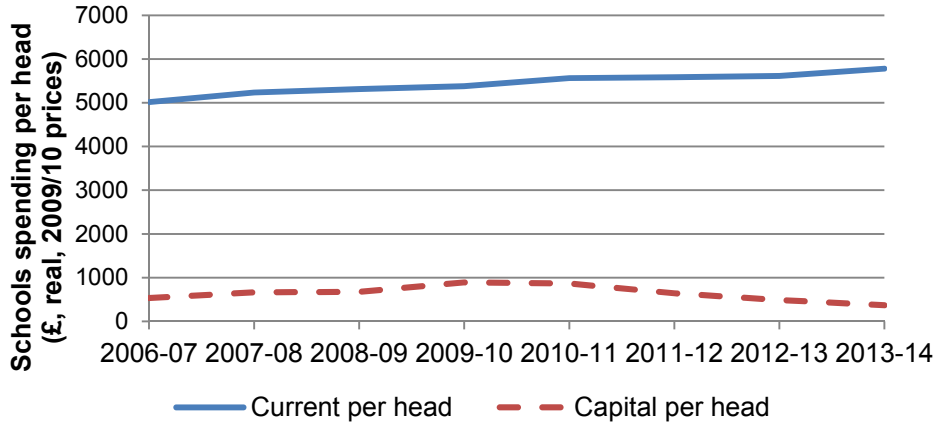
Figure 1: Total UK Public Spending on Education, in Real Terms and as Per Cent of GDP



Source: as Table 1

Turning specifically to England and to schools, data from the Department for Education show that schools spending overall was protected from budget cuts. Total school funding, including both current spending (which accounted for 86 per cent in 2009/10) and capital, increased by just £0.5bn, from £46.1bn in 2009/10 to £46.6bn in 2013/4 (in real terms in 2009/10 prices). The protection of school funding, during a time of widespread public spending cuts, is a point worthy of note. Current spending increased from £39.5bn to £43.8bn (up £4.3bn), an increase of 11 per cent (or 7.5 per cent on a per pupil basis). However capital spending decreased from £6.5bn to £2.8 bn in the same period, down (£3.7bn) or 57 per cent. Figure 2 shows these changes per head of pupil population.

Figure 2: Total Spending on Schools from 2006/7 to 2013/14, in Real Terms (2009/10 prices)



Sources: DCSF Resource accounts (2009/10), DfE Annual reports (2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13), Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics (2014)
Notes: Adjusted to 2009/10 prices using Dec 2013 HMT deflators
Per capita figures calculated using pupil numbers from all state-funded schools.

A key Coalition Agreement pledge was to fund a new Pupil Premium: billed as 'extra money', from 'outside the schools budget' for children who were disadvantaged. Children eligible for this extra funding were those considered disadvantaged (based on free-school meals eligibility in current and previous years), children looked after by the local authority, adopted children or children with a parent in the armed forces. Children eligible through the FSM criterion make up the vast majority (95 per cent) of these. Table 2 shows the eligibility criteria for each element of the Pupil Premium as well as how many children were eligible.

Table 2: Eligibility, per pupil amounts and total spend for Pupil Premium, 2011/12 to 2014/15

Year	Eligibility	Number eligible	Amount per Pupil
Free School Meals			
2011/12	Children in receipt of free school meals (FSM)	1,217,560	£488
2012/13	Extended to children who have ever been in receipt of FSM in the last 6 years (known as ever 6)	1,831,130	£623
2013/14	Ever 6 children - primary	1,104,440	£953
	Ever 6 children - secondary	812,830	£900
2014/15	Ever 6 children - primary	1,089,580	£1,300
	Ever 6 children - secondary	797,070	£935
Looked After			
2011/12	Currently looked after by a local authority and has been for more than six months	40,560	£488
2012/13	as 2011/12	41,420	£623
2013/14	as 2011/12	42,540	£900
2014/15	Extended to include children looked after for one day or more, children who have been adopted from care or leave care under a special guardianship or residence order	52,100	£1,900
Armed Forces			
2011/12	Children with parents currently in the armed forces	45,070	£200
2012/13	as 2011/12	52,370	£250
2013/14	Extended to include children whose parents have died in service and considered ineligible in 2013/14 but who have been eligible in previous years	57,940	£300
2014/15	Extended further to include children previously eligible but whose parents have left the armed forces or divorced	57,940	£300

Source: Adapted from Jarrett and Long (2014) to include numbers of eligible children from DfE Pupil premium allocation tables.

Note: Pupil numbers for 2014/15 are indicative as numbers are finalised once information from the yearly School Census has been analysed.

In its first year 2011/12, the value of the Pupil Premium, at around £0.5 billion, was considerably lower than the value of the Area Based Grants discontinued by the Coalition, at around £0.9bn (see Table 3). These included parts of the School Development grant, extended school start-up costs, music grant, assessment for learning, the co-ordination of the National Strategies, Education Health Partnerships and a range of others (see Chowdry and Sibieta 2011b for a longer list).

In its second year, it was substantially higher than it had been the previous year mainly due to the extension of the definition of 'disadvantaged children' to include those who had ever been on FSM in the past 6 years[8]. However, it was still slightly less than the abolished grants. This changed in 2013/14 when the overall spend on Pupil Premium rose to £1.25 billion.

Table 3: School Spending (Current) 2009/10 to 2013/14, Real Terms 2009/10 prices (£bn)

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Dedicated Schools Grant	29.67	29.70	31.18	28.04	26.79
Pre 16 - Academies	1.27	1.74	5.04	8.41	14.59
Standards Fund	3.26	3.69	-	-	-
School Standards Grant	1.56	1.53	-	-	-
Pupil Premium	-	-	0.53	0.93	1.25
Area Based Grant	1.32	0.97	-	-	-
Other funding streams	2.46	3.39	4.67	4.69	1.16
All current expenditure excluding pupil premium	**39.53**	**41.02**	**40.89**	**41.14**	**42.54**
Current expenditure total	**39.53**	**41.02**	**41.42**	**42.06**	**43.79**

Sources: DCSF Resource accounts (2009/10), DfE Annual reports (2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14), Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics (2014)
Notes:
As far as possible, spending for 2009/10 has been placed in the categories of later DfE reports. Where this has not been possible, the funding streams are listed separately
Adjusted to 2009/10 prices using Dec 2013 HMT deflators

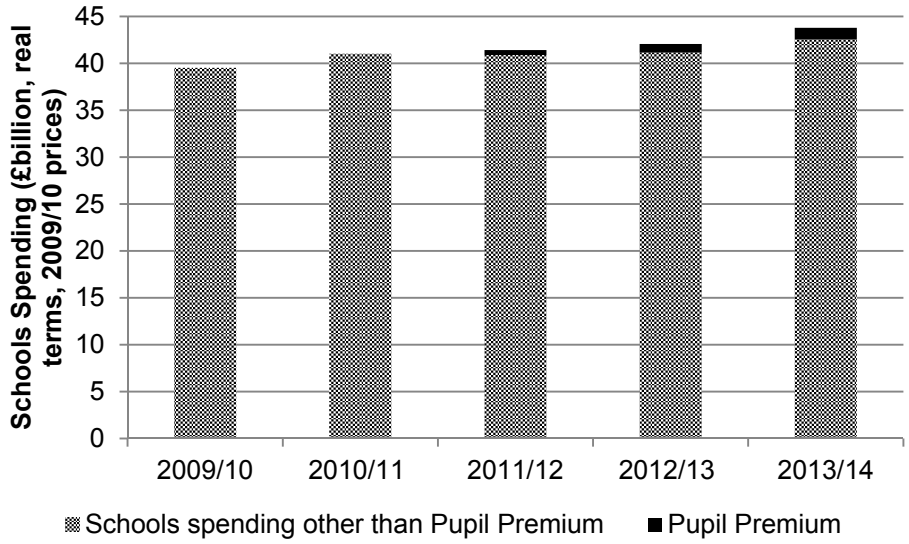
The question of whether the pupil premium was 'extra money' depends therefore both on timing and on what is counted. If capital spend is included in 'the schools budget', the pupil premium certainly does not represent extra money, since capital was cut much more. If capital is excluded, and we look just at the question of whether the pupil premium was more than the grants it replaced, the answer is no until 2012/13, and yes thereafter. On the other hand, as Figure 3 shows, the pupil premium grew from 2010/11 to 2012/13 while other school current spending stayed static (rather

[8] This definition includes a wider group and deals to some extent with concerns that eligibility for FSM is only available to out-of-work families, not those in low paid work. The 'Ever FSM' category is likely to pick up families moving in and out of low paid work.

than declining) and so the pupil premium contributed to a small rise in overall school current spending. In 2013/14, both other school spending and Pupil Premium rose.

Figure 3 shows that the Pupil Premium is a very small proportion of overall school spending (initially 1.3 per cent in 2011/12, rising to 2.9 per cent in 2013/14). The relative size of Pupil Premium budget is an important point to bear in mind in considering the relative influence of this policy compared with others affecting the education mainstream.

Figure 3: Schools Spending (current) in England, showing Pupil Premium and other spending 2009/10 to 2013/14 (real terms 2009/10 prices)

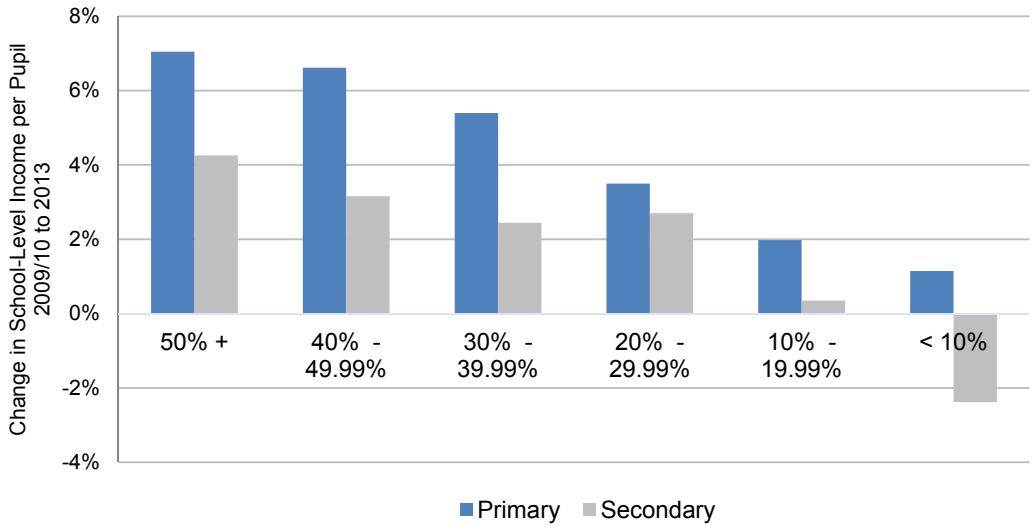


Sources: as Table 3

The Pupil Premium has, however, had a redistributive effect. In Figure 4, we show percentage change in school-level grant income per capita, splitting primary and secondary schools into groups based on their proportions of 'ever 6' FSM pupils in 2012/13. These data are for maintained schools only – they are not available in the same format for Academies. The 2012/13 data set includes only half as many secondary schools as the 2009/10 one, because such a large number of secondary schools had converted to academy status, but most (93 per cent) of the primary schools.

For secondary schools, the least deprived group of schools has experienced real terms losses in income of around 2.5 per cent (while more deprived schools have had real terms increases of around 4.3 per cent for the most deprived schools). For primary schools, the least deprived schools have experienced a small increase in grant funding (of around 1.1 per cent) while the most deprived schools have experienced a larger increase (of around 7 per cent). We would expect this pattern to be more pronounced in 2013/14 and 2014/15 given the increases in Pupil Premium funding for these years and the plans to make pupil premium payments for deprived children much larger for primary- than secondary-age children (see Table 2).

Figure 4: Changes in School-Level Income per Pupil 2009/10 to 2012/13, by ever 6 FSM band (LA Maintained schools only)



Source: Consistent financial reporting data for maintained schools, 2009/10 and 2012/13.

Notes:

Maintained schools here means those schools maintained by the local authority and so does not include academies. Data for academies is not directly comparable to that for maintained schools.
Authors calculations to convert 2012/13 to 2009/10 prices using HMT Deflators series (Dec 2013). Schools with unrepresentative funding (e.g. those in the process of closing at the time of financial reporting) have been excluded from calculations.
Schools were categorised into 6 bands by the percentage of children on ever eligible for free school meals in the last 6 years (known as ever 6) in 2012/13.
The national averages for % FSM were 19.2% (primary) and 16.4% (secondary) in 2012/13 compared with 27% for primaries and 29% for secondaries for % ever 6 FSM (Source: Pupil premium 2013 to 2014 final allocation tables, Schools, pupils and their characteristics data, 2013).

Another salient point to note about changes in current spending is that the Coalition spent substantial sums, and more than it intended, on school conversions (to academies). In total, £8.3bn – 10 per cent of its total revenue - was spent by the DfE on the Academies Programme between April 2010 and March 2012[9] (NAO, 2012). Of this, £338 million was "one-off transitional funding" which did not relate to the actual running costs of academies. A total of £43 million was paid to converter academies (mainly to cover the administrative costs of conversion). Sponsored academies received £279 million to cover costs of school improvement or to compensate them for "diseconomies of scale" until they had full cohorts. Though labelled as 'one-off' costs, these grants to sponsored academies continued to be paid for several years. The NAO (2012, p24) noted that academies opening in September 2010 had received average transitional funding of over £2 million each by August 2012; and that over 90 per cent of these academies continued to receive transitional funding in 2012/13.

According to the National Audit Office, the DfE underestimated both the number of possible converter Academies and the costs. The DfE's assessment of numbers "contained simplistic assumptions about some funding elements and omitted other costs, including sponsored academy start-up

[9] This includes sixth-form funding.

funding" (NAO, 2012, p14). Due to this rapid expansion, over the period 2010-2012, the academies programme cost the DfE £1 billion more than planned (NAO, 2012). In addition, in 2012/13, mistakes in budget payments by DfE to academies led to a further £174 million overspend. The cost of the first wave of free school premises was also double what the government expected (NAO 2013).

There is also the question of ongoing academy funding and its parity with the funding of other schools. Academies should receive equivalent funding to schools maintained by the local authority and they receive an additional grant to cover the costs of services that local authorities provide to LA schools for free. However, a survey of 1,471 heads by the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) in 2011 found that 75 per cent of headteachers who intended to convert or had converted to academy status believed that their school would receive more money for doing so. Research by the Financial Times suggests that this belief was not unfounded and that, on average in 2012/13, secondary academies received £90, 000 more per annum than LA-maintained schools (Cook 2013) (in addition to transitional payments). This is because DfE estimated the cost of the LA services grant at a higher rate per pupil than local authorities ended up spending. The funding differential between academies and local authority schools is now rapidly eroding with the intention that they will have equal funding.

The effect of the Coalition's decisions on school capital are shown in Table 4. While school revenue funding has been protected, the Coalition has made substantial cuts to school capital expenditure. By 2013/14, capital expenditure had fallen by 57 per cent on its 2009/2010 value and the focus of the remaining capital expenditure had moved away from refurbishing all schools (through BSF) to repairing those schools in the worst condition and creating new primary places. While we do not have an analysis of spending by area of deprivation, the implication is that disadvantaged areas are likely to have had less money than previously – the opposite trend to the one seen for current spending.

Table 4: School Spending (Capital) 2009/10 to 2013/14, Real Terms 2009/10 prices (£bn)

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Basic Need schools capital grant		0.26	1.33	1.23	0.94
Building Schools for the Future capital grant		1.38	1.15	0.96	
Free Schools	-	-	0.05	0.07	0.08
National Framework Academies capital grant	-	0.63	0.71	0.14	
Maintenance capital grants to local authorities		0.80	0.96	0.64	0.55
Investment in school buildings	0.40	0	0	0	0
BECTA/Future Technologies	0.06	0	0	0	0
Partnerships for Schools	6.10	0	0	0	0
Other capital grants	0.00	3.32	0.59	0.62	0.92
Capital expenditure total	**6.56**	**6.39**	**4.78**	**3.67**	**2.80**

Sources and Notes: as Table 3.

6. Inputs

In this paper we monitor three kinds of policy results[10]: inputs, which we define as the resources in the education system that were purchased with the funds expended; outputs, in terms of quantity; and outcomes for young people. We start with inputs, looking at school and workforce statistics.

School Numbers and Types

The most dramatic change in the school system under the Coalition has been the change in types of school.

In January 2010, just over half of state funded secondary schools were community schools, overseen by local authorities. Just 6 per cent were academies. By January 2014, only just over one fifth of secondaries were still community schools, and over one half were academies (Table 5). Changes at primary level were less dramatic – about one in ten primary schools were academies by 2014.

Table 5: Numbers and Percentages of Schools of Each Type of Schools 2010 and 2014

	Community	Voluntary Aided	Voluntary Controlled	Foundation	CTCs	Academies (incl free schools
Primary Schools, Numbers						
2010	10,318	3,706	2,516	431	0	0
2014	8,598	3,436	2,319	646	0	1,789
Primary Schools, Percentages						
2010	61%	22%	15%	3%	0%	0%
2014	51%	20%	14%	4%	0%	11%
Secondary Schools, Numbers						
2010	1,706	540	102	779	3	203
2014	744	324	50	315	3	1,893
Secondary Schools, Percentages						
2010	51%	16%	3%	23%	0%	6%
2014	22%	10%	2%	9%	0%	57%

Sources: DfE SFR 09-2010 and SFR 15-2014 (Table 2b). Data as at January in each year.
Note: CTC – City Technology Colleges

Both in the primary and secondary phases, the main driver of this change has been the increasing number of 'converter' academies – highly-rated schools choosing to become academies and not requiring a sponsor. These schools tend to be very different from 'sponsor' academies, which have

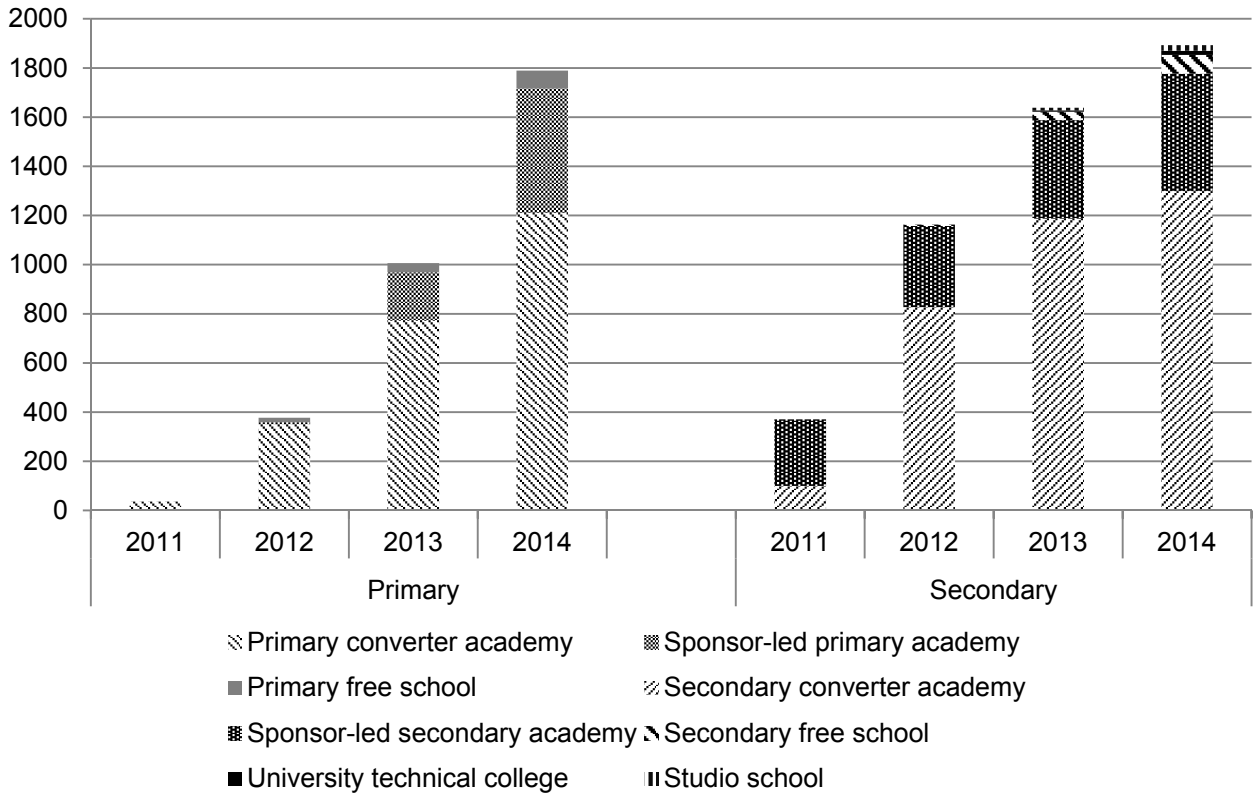
[10] The government treats policy results in a slightly different way. It has adopted a set of key indicators to monitor its performance in policy delivery. It calls these 'impact indicators', although a minority of them are indicators of spending or quality. We list them in Appendix 2 along with the latest data reported by the government. Although we have not structured our report around the government's indicators, they are all included in what follows.

replaced struggling schools, usually in disadvantaged areas. In 2014, sponsor-led primary academies had 32 per cent of pupils on FSM, overall, compared with 18 per cent in all primary schools, and sponsor-led secondary academies had 27 per cent, compared with 16 per cent for all state-funded secondaries.

Figure 5 shows how the number of each type of school has changed over time. Both for primary and secondary, 'converter' academies account for most of the growth. However the number of secondary 'sponsor' academies has increased steadily, as has the number of primary 'sponsor' academies since 2013.

Despite the considerable media attention surrounding them, free schools remained a very small proportion of all schools in 2014 (see Figure 5). There were just 76 secondary free schools and 72 primary, as well as 17 University Technical Colleges and 23 studio schools. These schools tend to have close to average FSM (15.4 per cent compared with 18 per cent in primary and 17 per cent compared with 16 per cent in secondary, in 2014).

Figure 5: Growth in Number of Academy Schools, by Type 2011-2014



Source: SFR 15 2014

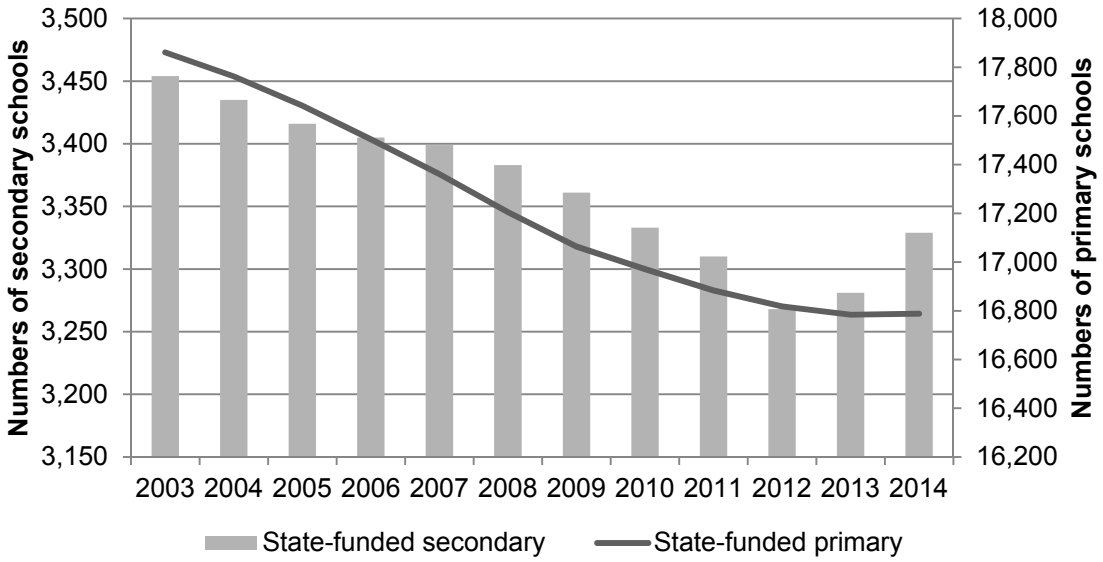
Notably, these newly established schools (free schools, studio schools and UTCs) have mainly opened in 2013 and 2014. As Figure 6 shows, the Coalition's policies of school diversification have resulted in an increase in the number of state-funded secondary schools since 2012, reversing a long run trend of decline. There were 3,329 such schools in 2014, just 4 fewer than the number in

2010 and 61 more than in 2012. The number of state-funded primary schools appears to have stabilised after a long period of decline.

Overall, the total number of state-funded schools in England (including special schools and Pupil Referral Units) was still slightly smaller in January 2014 than in January 2010 (21,452 compared with 21,375).

Capital investments in existing schools are harder to establish. By May 2013, 260,000 additional places had been created through the Targeted Basic Need Programme (to meet new demand). In addition 261 projects had been approved under the Priority Schools Building Programme. 42 of these were funded immediately due to the poor state of repair.

Figure 6: Trends in the Numbers of State-Funded Primary and Secondary Schools 2003-2014



Source: DfE SFR 15-2014 Table 2a.
Note: Does not include special schools or Pupil Referral Units

The School Workforce

Workforce statistics are available up till November 2013. They show very little change overall between 2010 and 2013, perhaps unsurprising given stability in spending on schools over this period.

As Table 6 shows, full-time equivalent (FTE) teacher numbers increased by one per cent (rising after an initial fall 2010/11), and FTE regular teaching assistants by 14 per cent. "Teaching Assistants" comprises support staff based in the classroom for learning and pupil support, such as teaching assistants, special needs support staff, minority ethnic pupils support staff and bilingual assistants.[11] The increase in the number of teachers was slightly smaller than the increase in the number of pupils

[11] Due to change in the method of data collection, changes in the number of non-classroom based staff are harder to establish. These include medical staff, librarians, technicians, administrators, premises and catering staff. Third party employed staff are also not consistently recorded before 2011. There has been a slight increase in numbers of such staff since.

over the same period (2 per cent), but the increase in the total classroom-based staff (5 per cent) was greater. The 'initial fall then recovery' pattern probably reflects the introduction and increases in the Pupil Premium. These data are reflected in the Office for National Statistics productivity estimates (only available until 2012) which showed a fall in education labour inputs in 2011 and 2012 for the first time since the turn of the Millennium (Caul 2014).

Table 6: Total Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Support Staff (Thousands): 2010-2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change 2010-13 (000s)	Change 2010-13 (per cent)
Total Regular FTE teachers	448.1	438	442	451.1	3	1%
Total FTE regular teaching assistants	213.9	219.8	232.3	243.7	29.8	14%
TOTAL	662.0	657.8	674.3	694.8	32.8	5%

Source: School workforce data

The Coalition's changes to teaching training and qualification requirements show relatively little impact as yet. Qualified teachers continue to make up the vast majority of the teaching profession (96 per cent in 2013).[12]

The number of unqualified teachers was actually slightly smaller in 2013 than in 2010 (17,200 compared with 17,800). However the number in Academy schools has been increasing since 2010. All the growth in numbers of unqualified teachers in secondary schools has come in the Academy sector (an extra 2,800 teachers between 2011 and 2013), while local authority schools employed 2,100 fewer unqualified teachers in the same period.

A similar pattern (not shown) is also evident with occasional teachers. Their numbers (headcount not FTE) fell from 11.6 to 10.3 thousand in maintained schools 2010 to 2013, but rose from 12.2 to 13.5 thousand in Academy schools. At the same time the government's own indicator of the percentage of lessons (in English, maths and science) taught by a teacher with a relevant qualification shows that the percentage dropped in all subjects from 2010 to 2013 (88.4 to 84.8 in English, 83.6 to 82.7 per cent in maths and 89.1 to 87.6 in science).

Moreover, by 2014, a widespread consensus had developed that there will be an upcoming problems in teacher supply, in the face of rising demand, especially for primary school teachers. Evidence taken by the School Teachers Review Body[13] (SRTB)(2014), indicated that there were already recruitment difficulties particularly in STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths), as well as a reluctance of deputy and assistant headteachers to apply for headship posts because of

[12] A small number of unqualified teachers are teachers trained in other countries who may work in English schools while gaining Qualified Teacher Status here.

[13] The School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) is an advisory non-departmental public body which looks into pay, professional duties and working time of school teachers in England and Wales and reports to the Secretary of State.

the professional risk involved, and an increase in numbers of teaching leaving the profession. Representatives of the NASUWT said "*there were a number of drivers of a potentially serious recruitment and retention crisis: increasing pupil numbers, tuition fees, the pay freeze and the pay cap, deteriorating conditions of service and the denigration and de-professionalisation of teaching*" (p10). In addition, concerns were expressed about the performance of the new School Direct training route. As has also been noted by Universities UK (2013), a significant number of School Direct places have been unfilled since its inception, while university allocations have been reduced and universities have turned down well-qualified applicants. The system creates additional uncertainty about student numbers for universities. Some higher education providers have closed their ITT provision. SRTB recommended that as the economy recovers, and with evidence of the gap between teachers' pay and that of comparable organisations widening, teacher recruitment and retention must be watched very carefully.

7. Outputs

For the purposes of this project we define outputs as the goods and services delivered as a result of the inputs - a measure of changes in the quantity and quality of education received, especially for the most disadvantaged pupils (Lupton et al. 2013). Unfortunately the data are weak here. The government does not collect information on hours of education received, either in school or in homework assignments, and indicators of process quality are hard to compare over time. The main indicators we can look at, therefore, are ratios of pupils to teachers, and some indicators of the quality of the education received.

Rising numbers of primary pupils, against a stable number of schools, led to a rise in the ratio of pupils to schools (255: 1 in 2014 compared with 234:1 in 2010). As Table 7 shows, this represents a marked discontinuity with the pattern for much of the 2000s. In 2014, 37 per cent of primary school pupils were in schools of 400 pupils or larger, compared with 25 per cent in 2010. Meanwhile the ratio of secondary school pupils to schools has fallen, but with no real change in the proportions educated in schools of different sizes.

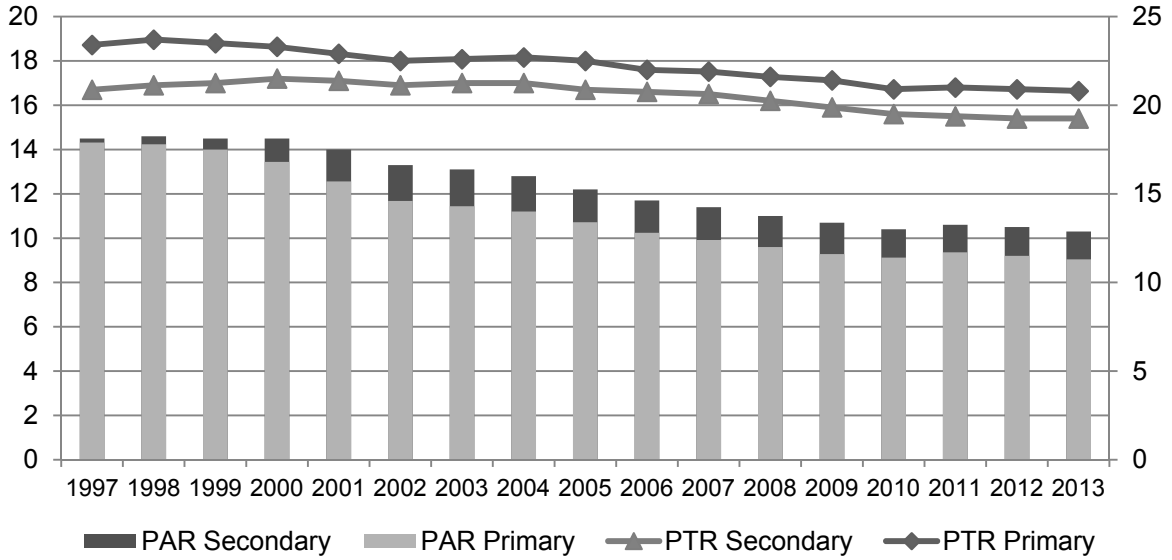
Table 7: Trends in Ratio of Pupils to Schools 2003 to 2014

	Ratio of pupils to schools - primary	Ratio of pupils to schools - secondary
2003	233	963
2004	232	976
2005	231	980
2006	230	983
2007	229	978
2008	230	974
2009	231	975
2010	234	983
2011	237	985
2012	243	990
2013	249	978
2014	255	955

Source: DfE SFR 15-2014, authors calculations based on number of pupils and schools

Although the number of teachers rose slightly less than the number of pupils, pupil-teacher ratios overall did not rise under the Coalition (until 2013, latest data) but stabilised after a period of decline under Labour. Pupil-adult ratios, which had also been declining particularly in primary schools, also stabilised (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Trends in Pupil: Teacher and Pupil: Adult Ratios 1997:2013

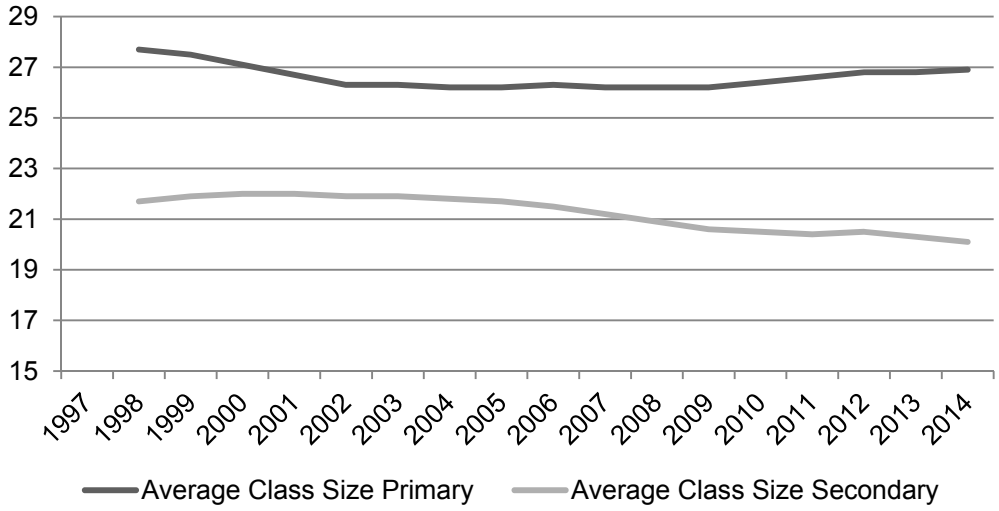


Sources: DfE: Schools, pupils, and their characteristics, Jan 2013, Table 6c (2010)
DfE Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics, Jan 2014 Table 6c, School Workforce in England Table 17a (2014)

Notes: 1. For statistical purposes only, pupils who do not attend both morning and afternoon at least five days a week are regarded as part-time. Each part-time pupil is treated as 0.5 FTE.
3. The PAR is calculated by dividing the total FTE number of pupils on roll in schools by the total FTE number of all teachers and support staff employed in schools, excluding administrative and clerical staff.
4. The overall PTR is based on the total FTE number of pupils on roll in local authority maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools and the FTE of all teachers in these schools
5. Special schools are not included within the overall PTR.

These ratios are calculated simply by dividing the number of pupils by the number of teachers employed in a school. Another measure is class size, which is based on actual classes as taught. This measure takes account of the way teachers are deployed. For example, if gains in the overall number of teachers is at the senior management level, class sizes will not necessarily reduce. These data show a slightly different picture, with average class sizes reducing in secondary schools, and increasing in primary schools, a pattern we might expect given demographic trends. Class sizes in primary schools were at their highest point in 2014 since the turn of the century. In secondary schools they were at their lowest. Average class sizes clearly do not reflect population pressures in particular areas or differences within schools between subject groups, for example.

Figure 8: Trends in Average Class Sizes 1997 to 2014



Sources and notes as Figure 7

Absence and exclusion data suggest that the system continued to be more successful at securing participation. Absence rates had been steadily falling since the turn of the century, but on entering government the Coalition adopted what it called a 'tough love' approach on absence, increasing parental fines, reducing the definition for persistent absence in order to make schools take action more quickly, and, from September 2013, preventing headteachers from authorising family holidays in term time. The rate of absence continued to fall, from 5.4 per cent to 3.9 per cent in primary (August 2009 to August 2013) and from 6.9 per cent to 4.9 per cent in secondary. The proportion of permanent exclusions continued to fall, from 0.08 per cent of the school population in 2009/10 to 0.06 in 2012/13.

All of these measures look at the quantity of schooling provided. The overall picture given by inspection data is that the proportion of outstanding and good schools has increased, but for secondary schools there has also been an increase in the proportion of inadequate schools. However, it is hard to determine whether these trends reflect real changes in the quality of schools or changes in the inspection criteria or are just features of the sample of schools inspected each year.

In 2009, 16 per cent of schools were rated outstanding, 50 per cent good, 32 per cent satisfactory and 2 per cent inadequate. The numbers of outstanding schools rose gradually from 2009, reaching 21 per cent in August 2012. From September 2012, it was no longer possible to be judged "satisfactory" – all schools not adjudged good were to be deemed "requires improvement". Baxter and Clarke (2013) show that schools that were reinspected under the new framework in 2012 tended to decline, compared with their previous inspection result, suggesting that the inspection regime became tougher. However, overall, after 2012, there was a marked increase in the proportion adjudged 'good' and a corresponding fall in the 'requires improvement' category. Overall in 2014, 20 per cent of schools were rated outstanding, 61 per cent good, 17 per cent 'requires improvement' and 2 per cent inadequate.

Ofsted's 2014 report noted that secondary schools' performance had 'stalled' while primary schools continued to improve (Ofsted 2014b). In 2014, 17 per cent of primary schools were rated 'outstanding' with 64 per cent 'good', 16 per cent 'requiring improvement' and 2 per cent 'inadequate'. The corresponding percentages for secondary schools were 21 per cent 'outstanding', 49 per cent 'good', 23 per cent 'requiring improvement' and 6 per cent 'inadequate'. The proportion of secondary schools judged inadequate rose from 3 per cent in 2009 to 6 per cent in 2014. In the most deprived fifth of areas, the proportion of inadequate secondaries rose from 5 per cent to 11 per cent in the same period. The 2014 Ofsted report suggests that the apparent gap between the quality of education in primary school and secondary school can be explained by the behaviour standards and leadership in secondaries as well as the problems recruiting teachers to, and improving schools in, deprived, isolated areas. The proportion of secondary schools rated as having 'inadequate' leadership is also rising and has almost doubled between 2012 and 2014 (Ofsted 2014b).

A key question is whether the widespread introduction of Academies has led to changes in quality. This question was reviewed by the House of Commons Education Committee reporting in January 2015, which concluded that *"it is too early to judge whether academies raise standards overall or for disadvantaged children"* (House of Commons Education Committee 2015, p23) and that conclusions could not be read across from research (e.g. Machin and Vernoit 2011) showing positive impacts on attainment from Labour's early sponsor academies. Later work had also showed that the positive impacts were mainly accounted for by the rise in attainment of students who were further up the distribution of KS2 test scores (Machin and Silva 2013). In 2012, 49 per cent of sponsor Academies and 13 per cent of converters were assessed as either inadequate or 'requires improvement' (formerly satisfactory) by Ofsted (NAO 2012) – not surprising perhaps given that sponsor Academies converted from weaker schools, but indicating that, at least in the short term "*academy status is not a panacea for improvement*" (The Academies Commission 2013). The Academies Commission, although finding some 'stunning successes', found the evidence "*does not suggest that improvement across all academies has been strong enough to transform the life chances of children from the poorest families" (p 4).* This finding was also supported by Hutchings, Francis, and de Vries (2014) who examined sponsored academies in chains, where there had been at least two schools for the whole period 2010 to 2013 – thus allowing the chain time to have made some difference. On average, they found that improvement for disadvantaged pupils in gaining 5 A*-C including English and maths was greater than the average for mainstream schools. However, they also found enormous variation and only just over half the chains exceed the average for mainstream schools. Some were highly ineffective and most relied heavily on equivalent qualifications and underperformed on the E-Bacc measure.

The challenges of managing a system of autonomous schools have become increasingly clear. During 2013 and 2014, there were several high profile cases of financial mismanagement - including £162,000 spent by Glendene Arts Academy to run a private company, nearly £1 million wrongly claimed by Barnfield College for students that did not exist and around £30,000 spent personally by the headteacher of Quinton Kyaston Academy - all of them highlighted by whistleblowing (Independent, 2014; TES, 2013; Guardian, 2013). In 2013, the AET chain was barred from taking on any new schools after financial irregularities were found in its accounts. There have also been concerns about the lack of a structure for the oversight of academies' teaching and learning practices. In 2014, the E-ACT chain was forced by DfE to 'give up' 10 of its academies after Ofsted inspections revealed poor performance at a number of its schools. Also in 2014, the Prospects Academy chain,

responsible for 6 schools, was forced to close after a string of poor inspections (BBC, 2014). Most controversially, perhaps, schools in Birmingham came under scrutiny in 2014 after allegations that they were promoting religious extremism. After snap inspections by Ofsted, five schools were placed in special measures and a counter-terrorism expert commissioned by the then Secretary of State, Michael Gove to undertake a full report. The report found evidence of a 'coordinated attempt' to introduce extremist views into certain schools controlled by one academy trust. Opening up the school system to a range of providers has also created a complex accounting situation for the DfE. The DfE estimates that it spent £12million preparing its 2013/14 accounts which included 2591 separate sets of academy accounts (NAO 2015). The difficulties of this consolidation process led to the Comptroller General issuing an adverse opinion on the DfE's 2013/14 accounts saying that they 'do not give a true and fair view of the state of the group's affairs … and of its net expenditure for the year then ended' (National Audit Office 2015).

In response to these concerns, in July 2014, the new Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, announced a series of reforms to school accountability, in addition to the appointment of the eight regional commissioners to oversee academies and free schools. Reforms included inspections of academy chains, 'oversight' of school governors and proposals to sack teachers without appeal for misconduct if they fail to protect pupils by exposing them to extremist speakers". However, issues of system governance have continued to come under scrutiny. In October 2014, the National Audit Office concluded that the DfE and other oversight bodies had limited information about aspects of school performance and had not demonstrated the effectiveness of its interventions (NAO 2014), and this same point was made by the Public Accounts Committee in January 2015 (House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts 2015). The PAC criticised the DfE's 'light touch' approach to school oversight and said it had increased autonomy in the school system without an overall strategy. As a result it relied too heavily on whistleblowers to identity significant risks of failure, and did not know enough about the effectiveness of academy sponsors nor about local authorities' oversight activities. The Committee particularly pointed to signs of declining schools: - of schools judged 'inadequate' in 2012/13, 36 per cent had previously been rated 'good' or 'outstanding' – and argued that oversight bodies need to work together to identify and intervene earlier in time to challenge and support schools. In the same month, the House of Commons Education Committee (2015) concluded its own investigation into Academies and Free Schools, also noting the lack of oversight in the new system, the need to strengthen governance in academy trusts, the need for greater scrutiny of academy chains and greater transparency about the accountability and monitoring systems for chains. While welcoming the appointment of regional commissioners it, like the PAC, was sceptical that these eight individuals could have sufficient knowledge to plug the accountability gap, and recommended a move to a more local system, with the roles and responsibilities of local authorities in relation to academies clearly set out. Whether or not a more autonomous school system has the potential to improve quality and outcomes, putting in place the mechanisms for its effective management seem certain to be a principal concern of any new government elected in May 2015.

8. Outcomes

Overall Trends in School Attainment

As noted at the start of this report, the Coalition came into office following a long period of rising examination results, especially at Key Stage 4 (KS4) (aged 16). Key Stage 2 (KS2) mathematics results appeared to have stabilised between 2007 and 2010 at around 80 per cent of pupils reaching the expected level, while KS2 reading had dipped slightly following a gradual rise in the 2000s. The proportion of pupils achieving five A*-C at GCSE was rising rapidly, and the proportion achieving this with English and maths included (5 A*-CEM) was also rising (Figure 9).

The Coalition's reforms to performance table measures and also to qualifications and assessment make trends over time more complex to assess. At KS2 the writing composition test was replaced by teacher assessment in 2012. In 2013, a KS2 test assessed grammar, punctuation and spelling. This means that we cannot show a consistent 'English' score over time. Consequently, we report on the trend in KS2 reading and mathematics only. KS2 reading results have risen since 2010 with 89 per cent of children reaching the expected level in 2014, after a slight dip in 2013 (Table 8). KS2 mathematics results have also continued to rise since 2010 with a particularly sharp rise in 2012. In 2014, 86 per cent of children reached the expected level in KS2 maths.

At KS4, measures were consistent until 2013, but changed in 2014. From that year, only a pupil's first attempt at a qualification was counted in the performance tables (the early-entry policy), point scores for non-GCSEs were adjusted so that no qualification counted as larger than one GCSE and the number of non-GCSE qualifications that counted in performance measures was restricted to two per pupil. In addition, the number of vocational qualifications that count at all was reduced, with some 3000 unique qualifications deemed to be of lower quality being excluded. IGCSEs from the AQA and WJEC boards were not counted as full GCSEs but instead as approved non-GCSEs in performance tables leading to several independent schools receiving a score of 0 for the proportion of pupils getting 5A*-C with English and maths (hereafter 5 A*-CEM)[14]. DfE released two sets of headline data for the KS4 results in 2014: the official results using the new qualification rules and an adjusted set following the old qualification rules (thus enabling comparison on a like for like basis). Table 8 and Figure 9 show the trends using both sets of figures.

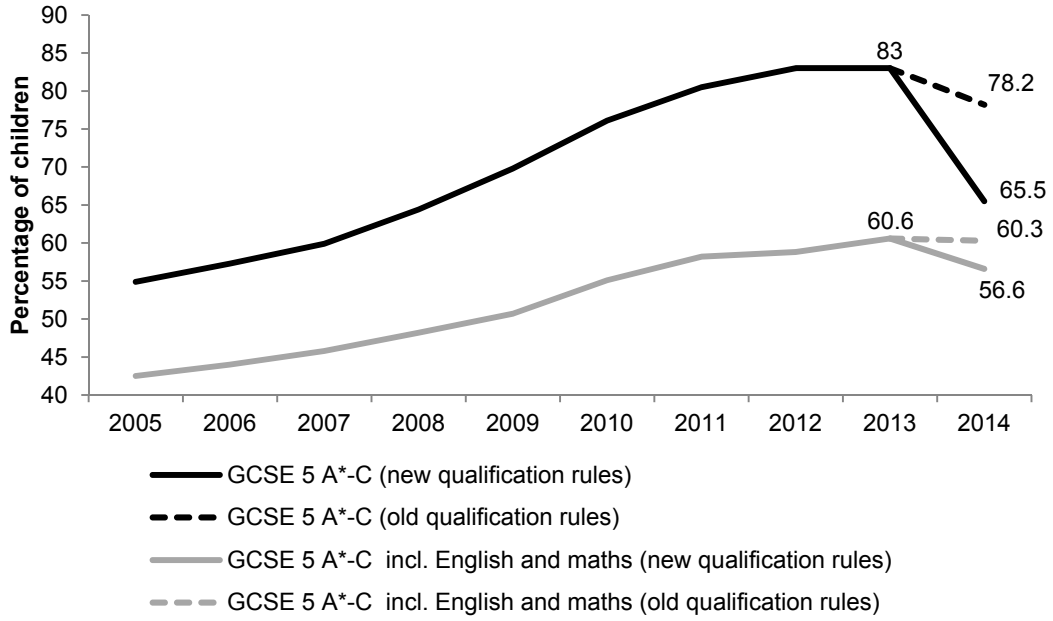
[14] For the 2014 performance tables, if a child took several AQA or WJEC iGCSEs, only two of these would count for them in the performance tables leading to many children being scored as having 2 A*-C at GCSE. If this was the case for a whole school, they would register a percentage of 0 on the 5A*-C measure. From 2017, no IGCSEs will count in performance tables.

Table 8: Percentage of children attaining KS2 and KS4 performance indicators, 2005-2014

Year	KS2 Reading level 4 or above	KS2 Maths level 4 or above	GCSE 5 *-C	GCSE 5 A*-C EM	Ebacc
2005	84	75	54.9	42.5	
2006	83	76	57.3	44	
2007	84	77	59.9	45.8	
2008	87	79	64.4	48.2	
2009	86	79	69.8	50.7	
2010	83	79	76.1	55.1	15.1
2011	84	80	80.5	58.2	15.4
2012	87	84	83	58.8	16.2
2013	86	85	83	60.6	22.8
2014 (old qualification rules)	89	86	78.2	60.3	24.4
2014 (new qualification rules)	-	-	65.5	56.6	24.2

Sources: SFR 50 2014 (KS2) and SFR 02 2014 (KS4)
Notes: KS2 results are for all pupils, KS4 results refer only to those in state funded schools. In 2010, industrial action meant the state school participation rate in KS2 tests was 74%.
From 2009/10, iGCSEs counted in the 5A*-C measures when they previously did not and in 2014, certain iGCSEs did not count as full GCSEs but as approved non-GSCEs.

Figure 9: Trends in GCSE attainment 2005 to 2014



Sources: SFR 50 2014 (KS2) and SFR 05 2015 (KS4)

Note: Data for KS2 refer to pupils in all schools. Data for GCSE refer to pupils in state funded schools. We start the data series at 2004/5 when the percentage of children obtaining 5A*-C with English and maths started to be recorded.

As the table and Figure show, the proportion of pupils achieving 5 A*-C at GCSE continued to rise until 2012. It then fell very slightly in 2013 for the first time since records began, but the proportion achieving the harder measure, 5 A*-CEM, continued to rise, going above 60 per cent for the first time in 2013. Analysis conducted for another part of the Social Policy in a Cold Climate project, and included here as Appendix 4, demonstrates that these improved results were not just a product of students being pushed over particular examination thresholds. The graphs at Appendix 4 show the entire GCSE points score distribution, in 2008, 2010 and 2013, and indicate very clearly a flattening of the distribution (greater equality) as the achievements of those towards the bottom end improved. There was a marked change between 2008 and 2010, but further flattening between 2010 and 2013. Figure A2 (Appendix 4) shows the marked improvement of the lowest attainers in state funded schools.

In 2014, there was a change in the trend. Using the old qualification rules (comparing like with like), there was a drop of 4.8 percentage points for the 5 A*-C measure and a very slight drop of 0.3 percentage points for 5 A*-CEM. These are what we might consider the substantive or real changes. The effect of the new qualification rules was an additional drop of 12.7 percentage points in the 5 A*-C measure and 3.7 percentage points in 5 A*-CEM. Thus in total the headline results show a single year drop of 17.5 percentage points for 5 A*-C, from 83 per cent to 65.5 per cent, and 4 points for 5 A*-CEM from 60.6 per cent to 56.6 per cent.

As a result, using the new rules (the new official measure), the proportion gaining 5 A*-C in 2014 was 10.5 points lower than in had been in 2010, while the proportion gaining 5 A*-CEM was 1.5 percentage points higher. If we look at the comparable, (old rules) figures, results were higher in 2014 than 2010 on both measures. The proportion of state-school students attaining the EBacc measure rose every year from 2010 and reached around 24 per cent in 2014, with only a marginal difference made by the counting rules.

A headline point to take from these data is that much of the rise in GCSE attainment at the 5 A*-C level has been accounted for by lower attaining students gaining additional vocational qualifications or ones of higher league table value, or by having several attempts at assessment. The change in qualification rules takes attainment at this threshold nearly back to its 2008 level. The government's response to the falling results in 2014 was that students were taking more valuable academic subjects and spending more time being taught rather than sitting exams – in other words that a fall in results represented a rise in standards[15]. In particular, the early-entry policy has led to a drop in the number of so-called 'early-takers' overall – those students who took a GCSE exam before the end of year 11 (Ofqual 2014). Schools often encouraged pupils to take GCSEs early if it was thought that they could obtain a C or above so that these results could contribute to league tables and so this was particularly common in English and maths. DfE described this as leading to students 'banking' their grades and not therefore achieving their 'full potential' (DfE 2011a). The cohort of

[15] This point cannot yet be tested by international comparison, since the latest data do not reflect the recent changes. For the record In the OECD's PISA tests, scores for English pupils in 2012 were the same as in 2009 for science, and higher for maths and reading, although rankings dropped for all three subjects. In PIRLS (a reading survey for 9-10 year olds), England's average score in 2011 was significantly higher than the all-country/area average and an improvement on 2006 (although only the same as in 2001). In TIMMS (a science and maths survey for 9-10 and 13-14 year olds, England's average score in 2011 was higher than the all-country/area average for both science and maths for 9-10 year olds, and higher in science but lower in maths for 13-14 yr olds. TIMSS results from 1995 onwards suggest that the mathematics performance of English pupils has improved (not stayed static, as in PISA), although science performance has declined.

early takers expanded greatly between 2007 and 2010 and, on average, early takers were found to do less well (DfE 2011a). In 2014, the proportion of overall GCSE entries made up by early takers dropped overall by 40 per cent[16].

However, the counting rule changes do not account for all the fall in results, as the comparison using the old rules demonstrates. Another explanation is that students taking examinations only once are achieving lower grades, or that students are being tracked into academic subjects in which they are doing less well. Changes to GCSE curriculum and assessment may also explain the trend. In 2014, students sat the first linear GCSEs, with less coursework and a stronger focus on end-of-course exams in all subjects. Some subjects have also seen additional changes. In English, speaking and listening assessments were not counted in the 2014 GCSE grade, a decision in 2013 while students were mid-way through the course, and English was also affected in 2012 when exam boards changed grade boundaries resulting in many students receiving lower grades than they were predicted. Table 10 shows the particular fall in higher grades in English compared with all subjects.

Table 9: Percentage of GCSE Exam Entries awarded different grades, 2008 to 2014

English

	A*	A	B	C	A*-C	50th percentile
2008	5.1	15.5	23.8	25.6	70	C
2009	5.6	16.9	24.9	26.2	73.6	C
2010	6	17.9	26.1	26.5	76.5	B/C border
2011	6.4	19	28.7	24.6	78.7	B
2012	6	17.4	28.2	25.2	76.8	B
2013	5.7	17.6	29.1	25.2	77.6	B
2014	4.2	13.2	24.7	29.7	71.7	C

All subjects

	A*	A	B	C	A*-C	50th percentile
2008	6.8	14.2	20.1	25.1	66.2	C
2009	7.3	14.9	20.4	25.6	68.2	C
2010	7.8	15.6	21.3	26	70.7	C
2011	8.3	16.1	22.4	25.5	72.3	C
2012	8	16	22.6	26.1	72.7	C
2013	7.5	15.5	22.7	26.6	72.3	C
2014	6.9	15.1	22.7	25.9	70.6	C

Source: SFR 02(2015)

While it may be argued that the fall in results brought about by the changes in counting rules could be to the advantage of individual pupils, for the reasons the government has given, it is much harder to see how the fall in results not accounted for by the change in rules is to learners' advantage. Some students have simply achieved less as early taking has been discouraged, academic subjects encouraged and assessment modes and content changed. The group affected is primarily lower

[16] However, it rose significantly in English literature – possibly because students are required to have a grade in English literature (not specifically an A*-C) in addition to an A*-C grade English language to fulfil the English component of the Ebacc.

attainers, struggling to reach the 5 A*-C threshold, something likely to concern a government concerned with equalising life chances.

Socio-Economic Inequalities

We now turn to socio-economic differentials as measured by eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM). Table 10 shows the basic trends at all the main Key Stage 2 and GCSE performance measures since the Coalition came to office.

Table 10: Trends in Key Attainment Measures by Free School Meal Status 2010 to 2014

Year		Key Stage 2 Reading expected level			Key Stage 2 maths expected level			GCSE 5+ A*-C			GCSE 5 A*-C (EM)			E-Bacc		
		FSM	non-FSM	Gap	FSM	non-FSM	Gap	FSM	non-FSM	Gap	FSM	non-FSM	Gap	FSM	non-FSM	Gap
2010		47.8	63.9	16.1	66.0	83.0	17.0	58.6	78.8	20.2	31.2	58.8	27.6	4.1	16.9	12.8
2011		70.8	86.8	16.0	67.1	83.3	16.2	64.7	83.1	18.4	34.6	62.0	27.4	4.3	17.1	12.8
2012		77	89	12	72.6	86.7	14.1	68.9	85.3	16.4	36.3	62.6	26.3	5.0	18.0	13.0
2013		75	88	13	73.8	87.1	13.3	69.3	85.3	16.0	37.9	64.6	26.7	8.8	25.0	16.3
2014	old rules	79	91	12	75	88	13	61.2	81	19.8	37	64.2	27.2	9.9	26.9	17
	new qualification rules							41.6	69.6	28	33.5	60.5	27	9.7	26.6	16.9

Sources: SFR 50 2014 and author's analysis from the NPD (KS2) and SFR 06 2015 (KS4)

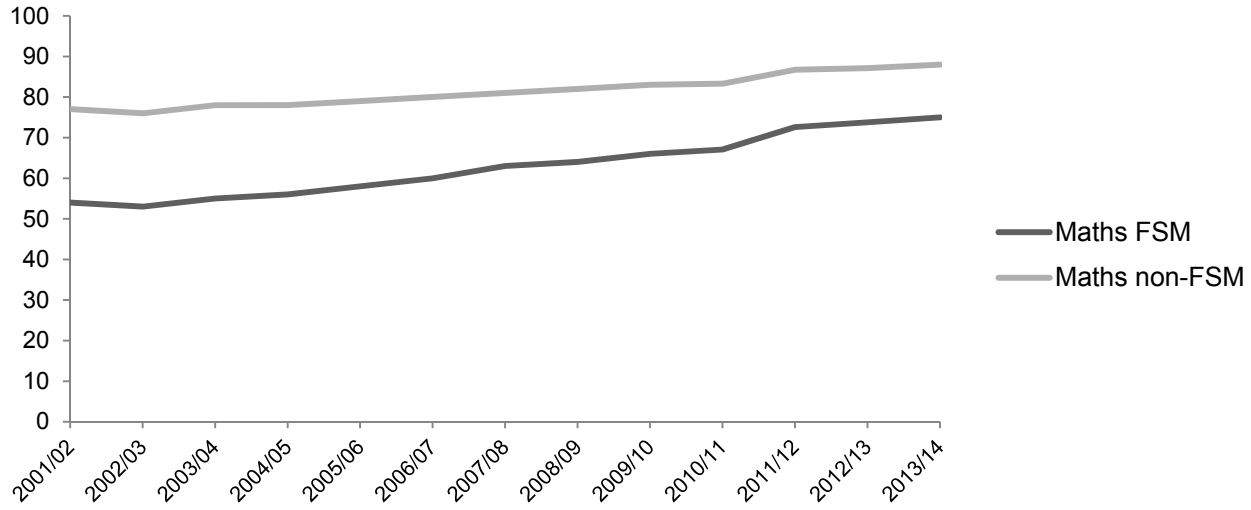
Notes: Data are for all pupils in state-funded schools.
In 2010, industrial action meant the state school participation rate for KS2 tests was 74%.

Several key points stand out. First, for most measures, the attainment of pupils on FSM rose every year from 2010 to 2013. In general, however (as shown by the Figures in this section which show a longer time trend) these increases represent a continuing the trend rather than a step-change. In other words, there is no indication of a Pupil Premium effect, perhaps not surprising since our earlier analysis shows that it is not until 2013/14 that the sums involved exceeded the grants abolished.

Second, until 2013, the overall picture was one of narrowing gaps between FSM and non-FSM pupils. For KS2 maths the gap between FSM and non FSM continued narrowing in 2014. As Figure 10 shows there was a marked step up for both groups in 2012 (the first year of the pupil premium), and particularly for the FSM group. The FSM gap for English (not shown) had been falling until 2010 and the FSM gap in reading scores (the only nationally tested element between 2010 and 2013) also fell until 2012 before rising slightly in 2013. However it is notable that the FSM gap in different elements of KS2 English is variable: the gap in grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) in 2014 was considerably higher (at 17 percentage points) than the gap in reading (12 points), and there

were also significant gender differences. In 2014, 84 per cent of non-FSM girls achieved the expected level in the GPS assessment, compared with 56 per cent of FSM boys – a gap of 28 percentage points. In reading, this gap was 16 percentage points.

Figure 10: Percentage FSM and non-FSM pupils Achieving Expected Level in KS2 Maths 2002-2014

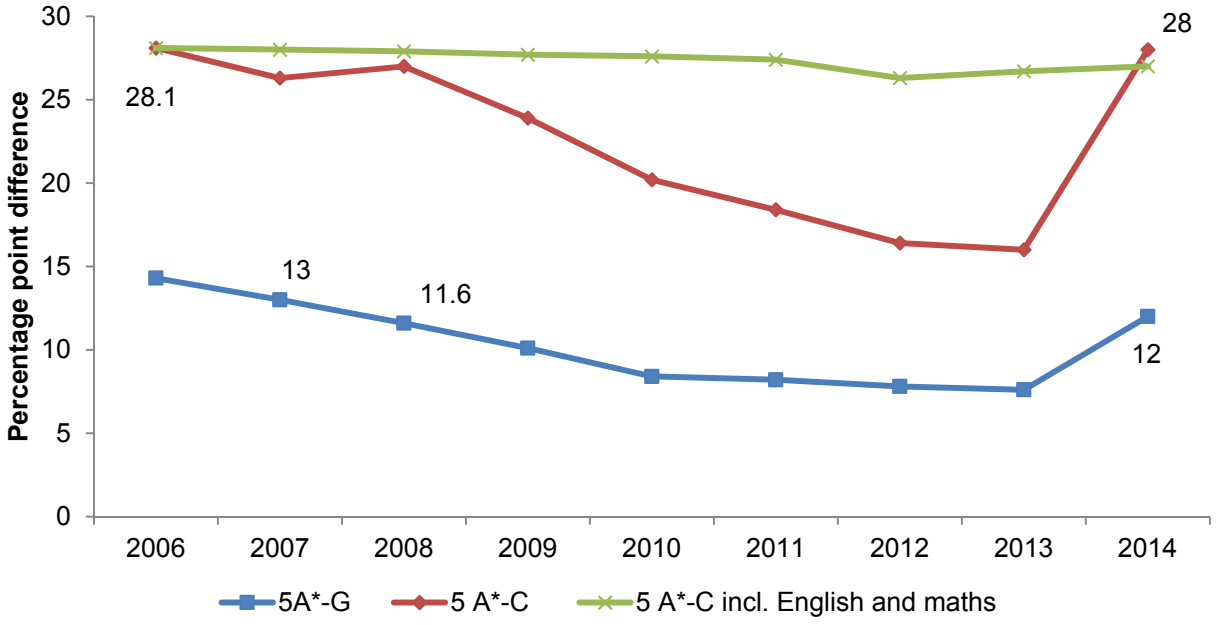


Source: Lupton and Obolenskaya (2013), SFR 50 2014

At GCSE the FSM gap at 5 A*-C also narrowed year on year until 2013. At the higher level of five 5 A*-CEM it also narrowed in 2011 and 2012, before opening up very slightly again in 2013 due to improved performance of the non-FSM group. As Figure 11 shows there was no real break in trend here from the Labour period. The E-Bacc (not shown) was entered and achieved in by higher proportions of non-FSM than FSM students and the gap actually widened over time.

Third, while these trends towards narrowing gaps continued at KS2 in 2014, at GCSE the performance of FSM students fell more than that of non-FSM students, thus widening the gap. On the 5 A*-C measure, the gap (using the new rules) has now returned to its 2006 level, suggesting that all the gains made since then have been due to a combination of students taking more vocational qualifications or ones with higher equivalent value, or having several attempts at an examination. If vocational qualifications were the sole reason, we would expect to see a drop in the 5 A*-G measure and this does not happen in 2014 (see Figure 11). Certain groups of students seem to have benefited particularly from these practices. In 2014, at the 5 A*-C level, the performance of white boys on FSM was down 29.2 percentage points on 2013 (from 64.8 per cent to 35.6 per cent), and children with Special Educational Needs on FSM down 32.8 percentage points (from 49.4 per cent to 16.6 per cent). The performance of FSM students in London has fallen less than in other parts of England.

Figure 11: Gaps between proportions of FSM and non-FSM students achieving different thresholds at GCSE 2006 to 2014



Source: SFR 06 (2015)
Note: This graph uses the new qualification rules

However, as with the overall results and as shown in Table 11, not all of the increase in FSM gaps can be accounted for by the rule changes. Using the old rules, at 5 A*-C, the fall was more pronounced for FSM students – 8.1 percentage points – than overall (4.8 points). The gap between FSM and non FSM pupils widened – from 16 percentage points in 2013 to 19.8 in 2014. When English and maths are included, there has been less change, with a fall of just 0.9 percentage points for FSM students and 0.4 for non-FSM students resulting in a widening of the gap of just 0.5 percentage points from 26.7 to 27.2. Thus the biggest losers in 2014 appear to be low attainers from poorer families. Further analysis is needed to determine whether this is due to differential effects of the changes to GCSEs or to factors outside the schools including rising child poverty since 2013 (Hills 2015).

Wider Outcomes

Finally, we look at a wider set of outcomes for children and young people. Under the Coalition. wider goals relating to child well-being, as expressed in Labour's 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) framework, were largely dropped. For this review we have revisited the indicators associated with ECM to try to establish and document trends post 2010. This exercise has its limitations. Firstly, we have not attempted a critical reading of the framework or sought to problematize the indicators themselves. It is debatable for some of the indicators which direction of a trend represents 'real' improvement. The most obvious case of this, which we discussed earlier, is the percentage of children obtaining 5 A*-C at GCSE. Secondly, for some indicators there is no available data, while in many cases, where there is data, the latest figures are not yet available and/or the time series pre-/post-2010 is very short. We have described trends where it is sensible to do and without seeking to ascribe statistical

significance to a trend. An attempt has been made to find official data sources for each indicator but we did not conduct primary analysis of large administrative data sources and so some gaps may remain. Table 11 summarises the results and the indicators are shown in full in Appendix 3.

Table 11: Summary of trends in Every Child Matters framework indicators

	Better	Worse	No Change	Not possible to assess
Be Healthy	6	2	5	7
Stay Safe	7	3	7	5
Enjoy and achieve	16	2	13	10
Make a Positive Contribution	9	2	6	9
Achieve Economic Well-Being	3	2	5	4
Total	41	11	36	35

Table 11 shows that, for around 28 per cent of the indicators, it was not possible to establish improvement or decline. For 40 per cent where trends could be established, there was no change in trend or a stable trend. As noted earlier in the paper, some of the indicators specifically related to educational outcomes have stabilised after many years of rising under Labour. One education indicator which has improved after a long period of decline/stagnation is the proportion of young people aged 16-18 not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). We report on this trend more fully in our paper on further and higher education and skills (Lupton, Unwin, and Thomson 2015). Of those indicators that show decline under the Coalition, many relate to vulnerable groups such as disabled children, care leavers and looked-after children. Such indicators include the percentage of children subject to child protection plans for a second (or subsequent) time, child protection cases reviewed within required timescales, SEN statements issued within 26 weeks and care leavers in employment, education or training. The education attainment indicators included in the ECM indicator set for looked after children have either improved or stayed stable since 2010. However, the government's own impact indicators covering this issue, which are slightly different measures, show the trend getting worse (Appendix 2). More details of all the ECM trends can be found in Appendix 3.

9. Conclusion

The Coalition's term in office from 2010 to date has been remarkable for the speed and scale of reform that has been enacted. In relation to its first objective, the government has certainly broken up the 'state monopoly' on schooling The majority of secondary schools are now autonomous institutions outside the remit of the local authority, and there have been other radical reforms - of curriculum, assessment and accountability measures. Some elements of this policy programme [what might be described as its neoliberal elements] show some continuity with those of the previous government – most notably the emphasis on choice and diversity in school provision. However, the scale of these changes eclipses anything Labour enacted in the thirteen years previously. Other [neo-conservative] elements have taken policy in significantly different directions to the one Gordon Brown's government was taking from 2007. Most striking is the move towards a narrower concern with cognitive outcomes (away from concerns with wider childhood), as well as a more traditional curriculum and linear assessment. The academic/vocational divide has been maintained. Other major reforms have been initiated throughout the education system: to teacher training, pay and conditions, school funding and accountability measures.

Reform on this scale has created its own difficulties. These have included: unanticipated costs of academy conversion and establishing free schools; the emerging difficulties of managing an autonomous school system; and a declared loss of confidence in government by the teaching profession. Apparent contradictions within the policy programme have also surfaced: a more rigorous national curriculum, but an aim to grant all schools independence from it; higher qualifications for teachers but more freedom for schools to hire unqualified teachers; greater localisation and school autonomy, but an increasing number of powers for the Secretary of State.

We thus head towards the 2015 General Education with a system in the midst of rapid change, key issues of system design and management to be resolved and a high degree of contestation within the education community about some key issues, such as who should teach, what they should teach, how this should be assessed, who should run schools, how they should be overseen, and what the Secretary of State should be in charge of.

These debates will need to proceed without any clear answers about whether the government's changes have been better or will be better for children's outcomes, nor even whether they have delivered on the Coalition's goals of more robust standards, better teaching, and a system in which poorer students get to go to better schools. It is simply too early to tell the effect of system change which has not yet in any case bedded down, while reforms to curriculum and assessment have not yet fully been implemented. In this situation of rapid change and data timelags, learning from historical and international comparisons, from qualitative studies, and from practice, will be as important in policy-making as scrutinising the quantitative evidence in the UK to date.

Early indications from the data we have are mixed. According to Ofsted there are more good and outstanding schools, but also more inadequate secondaries, with a particular increase in disadvantaged areas. Up until 2013, before the curriculum and assessment changes and with the implementation of the Pupil Premium, attainment continued to increase and socio-economic gaps to narrow, but with no break in the existing trend. The 2014 GCSE results give a clearer indicator of the likely direction of change under the Coalition's curriculum and assessment reforms. In this latest year, there were small overall small declines in attainment, when changes to counting rules are

accounted for, which the government might well defend with arguments that slightly fewer GCSE points is something worth trading for academic qualifications which will have higher value in the labour market. Overall results were still higher in 2014 than 2010 on comparable measures. However, bigger declines after the assessment reforms were experienced by lower attaining students, especially those from poorer families. Some outcomes for looked-after children have also declined under the Coalition.

Appropriate caution should be exercised about drawing conclusions from one year's data. Nevertheless, this development should some raise concerns for the Coalition and for the parties who seek to replace it in 2015. At a time of austerity, the current government has protected spending on schools in real terms. This meant that system resources have remained broadly stable, although with some additional pressures in the primary sector where spending did not quite keep pace with demographic change. Moreover, backed by widespread political consensus at the time of the 2010 General Election over the need to reduce educational inequalities, the Coalition has continued and extended the distributional shift in resources that Labour began. As overall system resources more-or-less flat-lined, schools with more disadvantaged intakes gained money in real terms, while schools with more privileged intakes have lost. There has also been an important change in the way in which these resources are targeted and used. Schools must now direct them specifically at disadvantaged students, rather than on school-wide improvements. These are policies with clear progressive intents. It may be too early to judge the effect of the Pupil Premium, and certainly too early to say that it has failed. However, the fact that, despite these efforts. outcomes seem to be getting worse for some of the most disadvantaged students at the end of secondary schooling, and remain very large throughout the system, should certainly raise questions about whether initiatives of this nature can deliver greater equality and/or social mobility in the context both of increasing family poverty and the broader suite of educational reforms which has been enacted.

Whichever government is elected in May 2015 therefore faces much the same situation in terms of socio-economic inequalities as the Coalition did when it took power in 2010, as well as a system in flux. The continued protection of school funding cannot necessarily be guaranteed. In this situation, system management challenges may well be the new government's first priority, but bigger questions about outcomes and equity remain to be resolved.

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Appendix 1: Coalition Agreement and Election Manifesto pledges: Schools

KEY PRINCIPLES/HIGH LEVEL PLEDGES

COALITION AGREEMENT "The Government believes that we need to reform our school system to tackle educational inequality, which has widened in recent years, and to give greater powers to parents and pupils to choose a good school. We want to ensure high standards of discipline in the classroom, robust standards and the highest quality teaching. We also believe that the state should help parents, community groups and others come together to improve the education system by starting new schools".

Principle	IN or NOT	Notes
LIBERAL DEMOCRAT PRINCIPLE		
A fair start for all children made possible by investing £2.5 billion in schools targeted to help struggling pupils	YES	
Ensure children get the individual attention they need by cutting class sizes	NO	
Give schools the freedom to make the right choices for their pupils	Not in the overall principles but in the detail	
CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLE		
We will improve standards for all pupils	YES	
And close the attainment gap between the richest and poorest.	YES	
Enhance the prestige and quality of the teaching profession	YES	
Give heads and teachers tough new powers of discipline	YES	
Restore rigour to the curriculum and exam system	NO	Except in the sense of 'robust standards'
Give every parent access to a good school	YES	

SPECIFIC PLEDGES

	Pledge	IN or NOT	Coalition Agreement
	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT PLEDGES		
1	Increase the funding of the most disadvantaged pupils, around one million children. We will invest £2.5 billion in this 'Pupil Premium'	YES	we will fund a significant premium for disadvantaged pupils from outside the schools budget by reductions in spending elsewhere. Note the Lib Dems high level pledge (made possible by the pupil premium is to "Ensure children get the individual attention they need by cutting class sizes" – suggests primary schools could cut classes to 20
2	Improve discipline by early intervention	NO but	P29: We will give heads and teachers the powers they need to ensure discipline in the classroom and promote good behaviour. (not really early intervention specific)
3	Guarantee Special Educational Needs (SEN) diagnostic assessments for all 5-year-olds,	YES more or less	P29 We believe the most vulnerable children deserve the very highest quality of care. We will improve diagnostic assessment for schoolchildren, prevent the unnecessary closure of special schools, and remove the bias towards inclusion
4	Improve SEN provision	No but	Arguably covered by above
5	Improve SEN training for teachers.	No but	Arguably covered by above and general teaching proposals
6	Improve teacher training by increasing the size of the school-based Graduate Teacher Programme and	Yes	See below
7	Support the expansion of Teach First to attract more top graduates into teaching.	Yes	P29 We will support Teach First, create Teach Now to build on the Graduate Teacher Programme, and seek other ways to improve the quality of the teaching profession.
8	We will improve training for existing teachers over the course of their careers to keep them up to date with best practice.	No but	Possibly covered by "other ways to improve the quality of the teaching profession"
9	We will seek to ensure that science at Key Stage 4 and above is taught by appropriately qualified teachers.	No but	Possibly covered by "other ways to improve the quality of the teaching profession" and p29 "We will seek to attract more top science and maths graduates to be teachers."
10	Confront bullying, including homophobic bullying, and include bullying prevention in teacher training.	YES	P29 We will help schools tackle bullying in schools, especially homophobic bullying.
11	Set aside extra money for schools to improve the energy efficiency of their buildings.	NO	

12	Establish a fully independent Educational Standards Authority (ESA). The ESA would oversee the examinations system, the systems of school inspection and accountability, and the detail of the curriculum	NO	
13	Axe the rigid National Curriculum, and replace it with a slimmed down 'Minimum Curriculum Entitlement'	NO	
14	Scale back Key Stage 2 tests at age 11,	NO	
15	Create a General Diploma to bring GCSEs, A-Levels and high quality vocational qualifications together	NO	
16	Give 14–19 year-olds the right to take up a course at college, rather than at school	NO but	P29 We will improve the quality of vocational education, including increasing flexibility for 14–19 year olds and creating new Technical Academies as part of our plans to diversify schools provision.
17	Reform league tables to give parents more meaningful information which truly reflects the performance of a school. Schools should be working to get the best from all their pupils but government league tables are forcing them to focus on those who are just above or below the key C-grade borderline.	YES	P 29 We will reform league tables so that schools are able to focus on, and demonstrate, the progress of children of all abilities.
18	Introduce an Education Freedom Act banning politicians from getting involved in the day-to-day running of schools	NO	
19	Replace Academies with our own model of 'Sponsor-Managed Schools'. These schools will be commissioned by and accountable to local authorities and not Whitehall, and would allow other appropriate providers, such as educational charities and parent groups, to be involved in delivering state-funded education	No, but	The principle of allowing other groups is reflected in P28/9 We will give parents, teachers, charities and local communities the chance to set up new schools, as part of our plans to allow new providers to enter the state school system in response to parental demand.
20	Allow parents to continue to choose faith-based schools within the state-funded sector and allow the establishment of new faith schools	No,but	Covered by above
21	Reform the existing rigid national pay and conditions rules to give schools and colleges more freedom	YES	P29 We will reform the existing rigid national pay and conditions rules to give schools greater freedoms to pay good teachers more and deal with poor performance.

	CONSERVATIVE PLEDGES		
1	We will give all head teachers the power to pay good teachers more	YES	P29 We will reform the existing rigid national pay and conditions rules to give schools greater freedoms to pay good teachers more and deal with poor performance.
2	We will expand Teach First and introduce two new programmes – teach now, for people looking to change career, and troops to Teachers, for ex-service personnel – to get experienced, high-quality people into the profession	YES	P29 We will support Teach First, create Teach Now to build on the Graduate Teacher Programme, and seek other ways to improve the quality of the teaching profession.
3	We will make it easier for teachers to deal with violent incidents and remove disruptive pupils or items from the classroom.	NO but	P29 We will give heads and teachers the powers they need to ensure discipline in the classroom and promote good behaviour.
4	We believe heads are best placed to improve behaviour, which is why we will stop them being overruled by bureaucrats on exclusions.	NO but	As above
5	Raise the entry requirement for state-funded primary training to a 2:2	NO but	Arguably covered by "other ways to improve the quality of the teaching profession"
6	Pay the student loan repayments for top maths and Science graduates for as long as they remain teachers	NO but	P29 We will seek to attract more top science and maths graduates to be teachers.
7	Give teachers the strongest possible protection from false accusations	YES	P 29: We will give anonymity to teachers accused by pupils and take other measures to protect against false accusations.
8	Reinforce powers of discipline by strengthening home-school behaviour contract	NO but	Could be covered by "we will give heads and teachers the powers they need etc
9	Promote the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics and ensure that teachers are properly trained to teach using this method	NO	
10	Establish a simple reading test at the age of six.	NO	
11	Reform the national Curriculum so that it is more challenging and based on evidence about what knowledge can be mastered by children at different ages	NO	
12	We will ensure that the primary curriculum is organised around subjects like maths, Science and history	NO	

13	We will encourage setting so those who are struggling get extra help and the most able are stretched.	NO	
14	We will keep Key Stage 2 tests and league tables. We will reform them to make them more rigorous	NO	
15	A Conservative government will reform school league tables so that schools can demonstrate they are stretching the most able and raising the attainment of the less able.	YES	We will reform league tables so that schools are able to focus on, and demonstrate, the progress of children of all abilities
16	We will make other exams more robust by giving universities and academics more say over their form and content	NO	
17	We will establish technical academies across england, starting in at least twelve cities	YES	We will improve the quality of vocational education, including increasing flexibility for 14–19 year olds and creating new Technical Academies as part of our plans to diversify schools provision.
18	Allow all state schools the freedom to offer the same high quality international exams that private schools offer – including giving every pupil the chance to study separate sciences at GCSE	YES	p.29:We will create more flexibility in the exams systems so that state schools can offer qualifications like the IGCSE.
19	Create 20,000 additional young apprenticeships	NO but	Could be covered by the broad statement on vocational education (above)
20	Allow schools and colleges to offer workplace training	No but	As above
21	Publish all performance data currently kept secret by the Department for Children Schools and Families	YES	P29 We will publish performance data on educational providers, as well as past exam papers
22	Establish a free online database of exam papers and marking schemes	YES	We will publish performance data on educational providers, as well as past exam papers
23	We will break down barriers to entry so that any good education provider can set up a new academy	NO but	Could be covered under broader statements P28/29. We will promote the reform of schools in order to ensure that new providers can enter the state school system in response to parental demand
24	So all existing schools will have the chance to achieve academy status, with 'outstanding' schools pre-approved,	NO but	As above
25	We will extend the Academy programme to primary schools	NO but	As above
26	We will introduce a pupil premium – extra funding for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.	YES	We will fund a significant premium for disadvantaged pupils from outside the schools budget by reductions in spending elsewhere

27	We will call a moratorium on the ideologically-driven closure of special schools. We will end the bias towards the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools	YES	We will improve diagnostic assessment for schoolchildren, prevent the unnecessary closure of special schools, and remove the bias towards inclusion
28	We will ensure that the schools inspectorate ofsted adopts a more rigorous and targeted inspection regime, reporting on performance only in the core areas related to teaching and learning	YES	We will simplify the regulation of standards in education and target inspection on areas of failure.
29	Any school that is in special measures for more than a year will be taken over immediately by a successful academy provider.	NO but	Arguably this is covered by: We will promote the reform of schools in order to ensure that new providers can enter the state school system in response to parental demand; that all schools have greater freedom over the curriculum; and that all schools are held properly to account.
30	Give parents the power to save local schools threatened by closure, allowing communities the chance to take over and run good small schools	NO but	Arguably this is covered by: We will promote the reform of schools in order to ensure that new providers can enter the state school system in response to parental demand; that all schools have greater freedom over the curriculum; and that all schools are held properly to account.
31	Make sure academies have the freedoms that helped to make them so successful in the first place	NO	
32	Ensure failing schools are inspected more often – with the best schools visited less frequently.	YES	We will simplify the regulation of standards in education and target inspection on areas of failure.

Appendix 2: Coalition Government Impact Indicators: Schools

Green denotes an indicator going in the desired direction, red undesired, yellow no change

Indicator	Trend since 2009/2010	Latest data reported
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4+ in all of reading, writing and maths by gender[17]	No change	2014
Percentage of pupils achieving English and mathematics GCSEs at grades A*-C	Higher	2014
Percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 by age 19	Higher	2013
Percentage of pupils achieving the EBacc at age 16	Higher	2014
Attainment gap at age 11 between Free School Meal pupils and all others	Lower	2014
Attainment gap at age 16 between Free School Meal pupils and all others	Lower	2014
Percentage of looked after children achieving level 4 or higher in reading, writing and mathematics[18]	Lower	2013
Percentage of looked after children achieving grade A*-C in English and mathematics	Lower	2013
Number of primary schools below the floor standard[19]		Not comparable
Number of secondary schools below the floor standard[20]	Higher	2014
Attainment gap between schools with the greatest and the least proportion of disadvantaged pupils	Lower	2014
Percentage of lessons taught by teachers with a relevant qualification	Lower	2013
Overall absence rates in primary, secondary and special schools	Lower	2014
Number of Academies and Free Schools[21]	Higher	Jan 2015

[17] Consistent data only from 2012 for this indicator
[18] From 2014, outcomes for looked after children were not reported separately in the national results
[19] The primary school floor standard changed in 2012, 2013 and 2014
[20] The secondary school floor standard changed in 2012 so these data cover the period from 2012
[21] Unlike the other outcomes in this list which would be regarded as desirable across the political spectrum, this indicator may have less universal agreement. We have coloured it green to indicate that it moved in the direction desired by government.

Appendix 3: Every Child Matters Framework Summary of Trends in Indicators

Be Healthy

	Childhood obesity (reception)	Childhood obesity (Y6)	Access to PE	Take up of sport by young people outside school	Improvement in access to CAMHS	Increase in breastfeeding	Reduce under-18 conception rate	Regular drug taking	Regular alcohol use	Prevalence of chlamydia in under 25s
Trend to 2010										
Trend since 2010										
Source	National Child Measurement Programme report: Changes in children's BMI between 2006/07 and 2012/13	National Child Measurement Programme report: Changes in children's BMI between 2006/07 and 2012/13	PE and Sport Survey 2009/10 (latest data)	Taking Part 2012/13 Annual Child Report	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Tier 4 Report	Infant Feeding Survey 2010 (latest data)	ONS Conception Statistics, England and Wales, 2012 (latest data)	ONS Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People in England - 2013, Table 2.12	ONS Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use Among Young People in England - 2013, Table 4.6b	

	Drug-related crime	Percentage of children having school lunches	Parents experience of services for disabled children	Emotional and behavioural health of looked after children	Parental confidence	Number of new and renewed public play areas	Early access to maternity services	Self reported experience of social care users	Alcohol-related admissions to hospital	All age all cause mortality
Trend to 2010										
Trend since 2010										
Source	Bryan et al (2013) Drug-related crime, ISER, Colchester.	Take up of school lunches in England, 2011-2012 (latest data)	Parental experiences of services provided to disabled children: 2009-10	Last National Indicators dataset (2010), Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities, 2011-2014			National survey of womens' experiences of maternity care, 2006, 2010, 2013	Last national indicator dataset, Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework, England - 2012/13, 2013/14	Statistics on Alcohol, England, 2002-2013	Mortality in the United Kingdom, 1983-2013

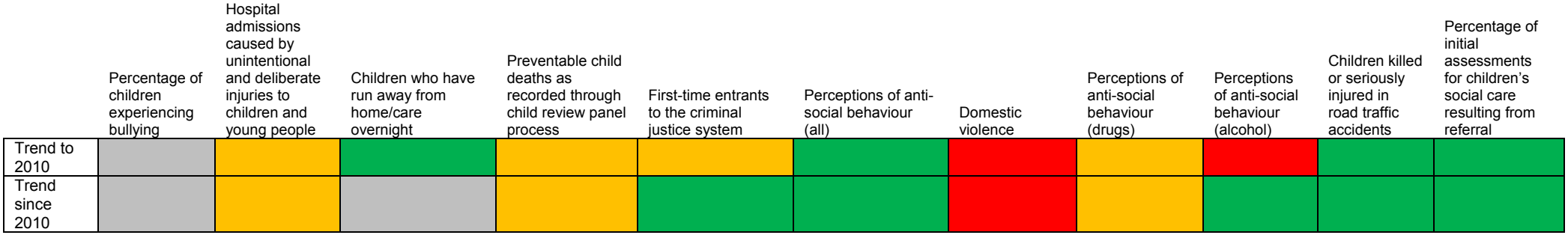
Situation improving

Situation worsening

No clear trend or stable trend in available data

No available data/ no data found

Stay Safe



	Percentage of children experiencing bullying	Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries to children and young people	Children who have run away from home/care overnight	Preventable child deaths as recorded through child review panel process	First-time entrants to the criminal justice system	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour (all)	Domestic violence	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour (drugs)	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour (alcohol)	Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	Percentage of initial assessments for children's social care resulting from referral
Trend to 2010											
Trend since 2010											
Source		Last National Indicators dataset, Hospital Episodes data	Last National Indicators dataset, from 2010	Child death reviews: year ending March 2014 (DfE SFR 21 2014)	Youth Justice Statistics 2012/13	Crime Survey for England and Wales	Violence against Women and Girls Crime Report (CPS), 2013/14	Crime Survey for England and Wales	Crime survey for England and Wales	Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: Main Results 2013	Characteristics of Children in Need, 2010-2014

	Percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 7 working days of referral	Percentage of core assessments carried out within 35 days	Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption	Stability of placements for looked-after children (duration)	Stability of placements for looked-after children (number)	Subject to a child protection plan of length 2 years and over	Subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time	Child protection cases reviewed within required timescales	Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales	Percentage of child protection initial assessments conducted as a result of referrals	Repeat incidents of domestic violence
Trend to 2010											
Trend since 2010											
Source		Characteristics of Children in Need, 2010-2014		Last National Indicators dataset, Children looked after in England, including adoption	Last national indicator dataset (for up to 2010), Children looked after in England, including adoption (from 2010).	Last national indicator dataset (for up to 2010), Characteristics of children in need (from 2010).			Last national indicator dataset	Last national indicator dataset (for up to 2010), Characteristics of children in need (from 2010).	

Situation improving

Situation worsening

No clear trend or stable trend in available data

No available data/ no data found

Enjoy and achieve

	Achievement in EYFS	Level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2	Level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS3	Proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19	Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19	Achievement at level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3	Achievement of 2 or more A*- C grades in Science GCSEs or equivalent	Secondary school persistent absence rate	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest	Proportions of pupils progressing by 2 levels in English at Key Stage 2
Trend to 2010											
Trend since 2010											
Source	Early years foundation stage: profile results in England.	National curriculum assessments at key stage 2, (DfE SFR 50, 2014)		GCSE and equivalent results in England.	Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19	Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19	Last National Indicators dataset, National Curriculum Assessments: Teacher Assessments at Key Stage 2 and 3 in England, GCSE and equivalent results in England,	Last National Indicators dataset, GCSE and equivalent results in England, 2012 to 2013, Provisional GCSE results 2013/14.	Pupil absence in schools in England	Early years foundation stage: profile results in England	National curriculum assessments at key stage 2 in England.

	Proportions of pupils progressing by 2 levels in Maths at Key Stage 2	Proportions of pupils progressing by 2 levels in English at Key Stage 3	Proportions of pupils progressing by 2 levels in Maths at Key Stage 3	Proportions of pupils progressing by 2 levels in English at Key Stage 4	Proportions of pupils progressing by 2 levels in Maths at Key Stage 4	Looked after children reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2	Looked after children reaching level 4 in maths at Key Stage 2	Looked after children reaching 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and maths)	FSM Achievement gap for expected levels at Key Stage 2	FSM Achievement gap for expected levels at Key Stage 4 (5A*-C with English and Maths)	The SEN / non-SEN gap - achieving Key Stage 2 English and maths threshold
Trend to 2010											
Trend since 2010											
Source	National curriculum assessments at key stage 2 in			GCSE and equivalent results in England. debate with claims of grade inflation.	GCSE and equivalent results in England.	Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities.	Outcomes for children looked after by local authorities	GCSE and equivalent results in England.	National curriculum assessments at key stage 2 in England	GCSE and equivalent results in England.	National curriculum assessments at key stage 2 in England.

Situation improving

Situation worsening

No clear trend or stable trend in available data

No available data/ no data found

Enjoy and achieve (cont.)

	Key Stage 2 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups (English)	Key Stage 2 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups (Maths)	Key Stage 4 attainment for Black and minority ethnic groups	Gap between initial participation rate in full time higher education rates for young people aged 18, 19 and 20 from the top three and bottom four socio-economic classes	Young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education	Reduction in number of schools below floor standard at KS2	Reduction in number of schools below floor standard at KS3	Reduction in number of schools below floor standard at KS4	Secondary schools judged as having good or outstanding standards of behaviour	Percentage of schools providing access to extended services	Number of schools judged as requiring special measures (primary)
Trend to 2010											
Trend since 2010											
Source	National curriculum assessments at key stage 2 in England.	National curriculum assessments at key stage 2 in England.	GCSE results by pupil characteristics, England.	The proportion of 15 year olds from low income backgrounds in English maintained schools progressing to HE by the age of 19, BIS 2014		National curriculum assessments at key stage 2 in England.	Last National Indicators dataset.	GCSE and equivalent results in England.	Last National Indicators dataset, Ofsted data viewer.	Last National Indicators dataset	Last National Indicators dataset, Ofsted data viewer.

	Improvement in time taken to come out of special measures (primary)	Reduction in number of schools judged as requiring special measures (secondary)	Improvement in time taken to come out of special measures (secondary)	SEN statements issued within 26 weeks	Delivery of Sure Start Children Centres	Rate of permanent exclusions from school	Take up of formal childcare by low-income working families	Proportion (or number) of mature entrants to higher education from deprived areas
Trend to 2010								
Trend since 2010								
Source		Last National Indicators dataset, Ofsted data viewer. Ofsted inspection		Last National Indicators dataset, Children with special educational needs: an analysis.		Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England	Last National Indicators dataset	UCAS data for students in POLAR 2 areas (of low educational take-up).

Situation improving

Situation worsening

No clear trend or stable trend in available data

No available data/ no data found

Make a Positive Contribution

	Level 2 by age 19	Level 3 by age 19	Post-16 participation in physical sciences	Take up of 14 –19 learning diplomas	Participation of 17 year-olds in education or training	More participation in Positive Activities	Serious violent crime rate	Serious knife crime rate	Gun Crime Rate	Skills gap in the current workforce reported by employers	Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour by the local council/police	Satisfaction with the way police and local council deal with anti-social behaviour
Trend to 2010													
Trend since 2010													
Source	Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19	Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19	A level and other level 3 results.	Diploma learning in England.	Participation in education, training and employment by 16- to 18-year-olds in England	Last National Indicators dataset	Crime Statistics, Year Ending June 2014 - category 'violent crime'	Knife Possession Quarterly Brief, category 'Possession of an article with a blade or point'	Crime Statistics, Focus on Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2012/13	Last National Indicators dataset, UKCES Employer Skills Survey 2013	Proven reoffending statistics: January 2012 to December 2012	Crime Statistics – Focus on Public Perceptions of Policing	

Situation improving

Situation worsening

No clear trend or stable trend in available data

No available data/ no data found

	local council dealt with antisocial behaviour	about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police	Building resilience to violent extremism	Young people in the youth justice system receiving a conviction in court sentenced to custody	Ethnic composition of offenders in the Youth Justice System (Asian)	(Black)	(Mixed)	(Other)	(White)	Young offenders with suitable education, training or employment	suitable accommodation	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in settled accommodation	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment
Trend to 2010													
Trend since 2010													
Source	Crime Statistics - Focus on Public Perceptions of Policing.		Last National Indicators dataset		Youth Justice Statistics					Last National Indicators dataset			

Achieve Economic Wellbeing

	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area	Perceptions that people in their area treat one another with respect and dignity	16 - 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Proportion of children in Poverty (Relative median HH income, Before Housing)	Children travelling to school - mode of transport usually used	Care leavers in suitable accommodation	Care leavers in employment, education or training
Trend to 2010							
Trend since 2010							
Source			Participation in education, training and employment, age 16 to 18	Households Below Average Income		Last National Indicators dataset, Children looked after in England, including adoption	Last National Indicators dataset, Children looked after in England, including adoption

	Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation	Local Bus and light rail passenger journeys originating in the authority area	Bus services running on time (frequent)	Bus services running on time (non-frequent)	The number of children in absolute low-income households	The number of children in relative low-income households	The number of children in relative low-income households and in material deprivation
Trend to 2010							
Trend since 2010							
Source	DCLG Live tables on homelessness		Annual bus statistics: year ending, March 2014	Annual bus statistics: year ending, March 2014	Households Below Average Income, percent of children below median HH income, absolute		

Situation improving

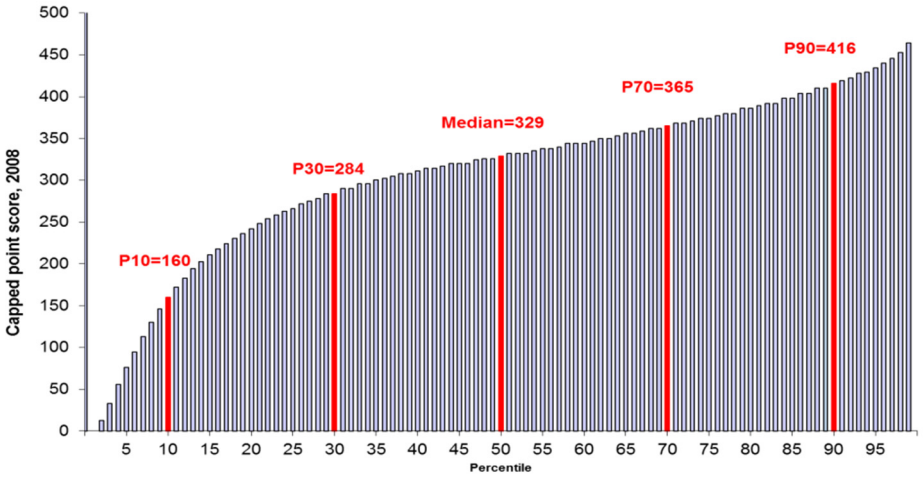
Situation worsening

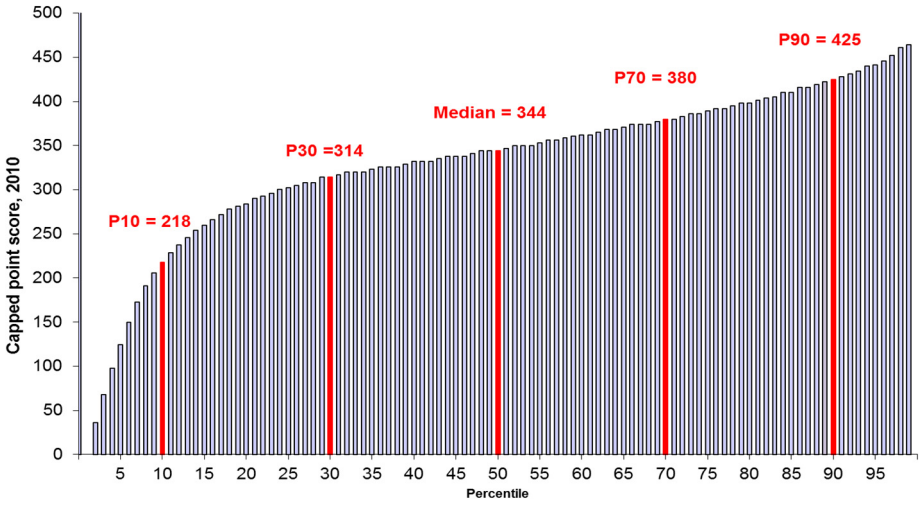
No clear trend or stable trend in available data

No available data/ no data found

Appendix 4: Distribution of capped point scores

Figure A12: Distribution of capped point scores, maintained schools, 2008, 2010 and 2013 (England)





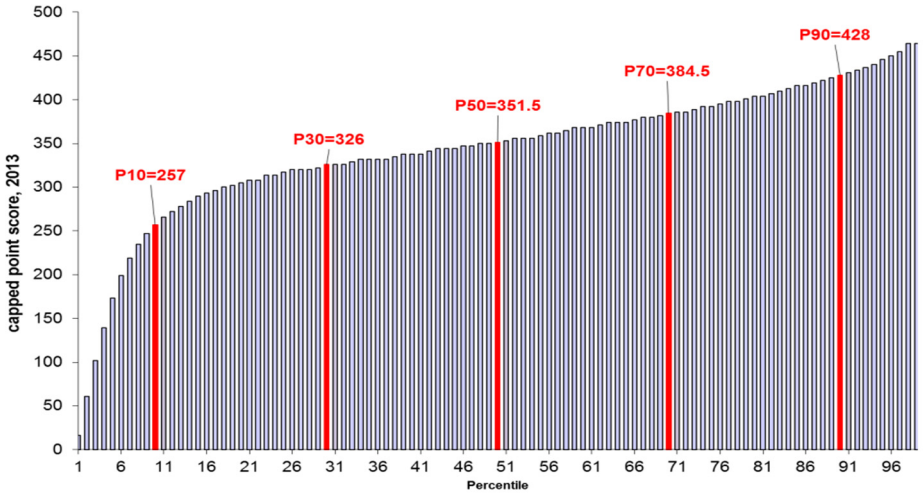


Figure A13: Distribution of KS4 results, all pupils, 2008, 2010 and 2013 (England)