Review of evidence on education in the north of England

Research report

November 2016

Sue Tate and Professor David Greatbatch – Sue Tate Consulting Ltd

Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction

Improving academic education to age 19 is a key component of efforts to create a 'Northern Powerhouse', centred on the 'core cities' of Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield and Newcastle. It is widely recognised that in order to maximise the potential of the North of England, it will be necessary to improve educational performance, especially for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those in underperforming schools and colleges (Clifton et al 2016; Ofsted 2015; Budget speech 2016).

The Chancellor announced in the March 2016 budget that the government will invest £20m a year of new funding in a Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy, and commissioned Sir Nick Weller to lead an in-depth review into transforming education across the Northern Powerhouse. The review looks specifically at Northern Powerhouse regions because there seems to be a particular concentration of underperforming areas in the North, and ensuring access to an excellent education for all pupils is critical for the long term success of the Northern Powerhouse.

Research objectives

The primary objective of this project is to synthesise available evidence on academic education to age 19 in the north, specifically:

- Identifying, defining and understanding problems with the quality of education in the north of England including its causes;

- Identifying and understanding effective provision in the north and its causes;

- Identifying and assessing the impact of interventions which have specifically tried to address issues resulting from northern-specific problems.

Methodology

A protocol was developed in consultation with the Department for Education detailing the search procedures to be followed including: the search terms[1]; the locations/sources to be searched; the screens each study would pass through for inclusion in the review; and the processes for recording and storing references and summarising literature. Using the

---

[1] See Appendix 1 for the list of search terms used

agreed protocol, we searched a wide range of online databases and websites such as the Education Research Abstracts Online and the Education Resources Information Centre online digital library (ERIC) which offer electronic access to most published literature.[2] We also undertook a web search for research studies (qualitative and quantitative), relevant reports (for example from Ofsted, think tanks, charities) and blogs and articles from authoritative sources.

Once studies had been identified, they were assessed for eligibility against the following inclusion criteria (using a two-stage approach to reviewing the title and abstract and full text):

- published in 2006 or later;

- involved studies that included schools in northern England; or

- included research, strategies, approaches or models that reflect the themes identified in the initial review of studies relating to the performance of Northern schools.

In total, 65 documents were included in the review (34 peer reviewed journal articles and 31 research reports and other data sources).

Literature searches showed only a limited number of studies that compared and analysed school performance in the North in comparison to the rest of the country although these did identify issues that, although not restricted to the North, are more common than elsewhere such as areas of deprivation and schools that are geographically isolated. A larger number of studies involved research in northern schools or explored issues that had been identified in the comparative studies as being prevalent in northern schools but not restricted to them. Consequently, the decision was taken to include these studies for additional perspectives on barriers to attainment and strategies for improvement in schools in the North.

Key findings

Overview of education in the North

- The literature was clear that there is a disparity between school performance in the North compared with other regions, even when relative socio-economic disadvantage is taken into account.

---

[2] See Appendix 2 for a full list of databases and journals searched.

- This difference is most marked at secondary level where 79% of schools in the South of England are good or outstanding, compared with only 68% in the North and Midlands.

- All three regions in the North (the North East, the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber) are below the national average in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A* to C grades at GCSE including English and maths (Ofsted 2015).

Socio-economic disadvantage and deprivation

- Data on school attainment in England indicate that overall the North performs relatively well on primary school attainment for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds but that many of these pupils fare less well at secondary schools and it is widely argued that this is where the policy focus should be when considering how to tackle education inequality in the North.

- Fewer pupils in the North that are eligible for free school meals went on to higher level study in 2014 compared with the national average

- A greater proportion of young people go on to become NEET (not in education, employment or training).

- A number of secondary schools in the North which have large numbers of disadvantaged pupils have been identified as 'beacons of success' (Clifton et al 2016) and these may well provide a source of effective strategies that could be shared across the North.

Leadership and governance

- Schools in socially disadvantaged areas struggle to recruit new headteachers compared with schools in more affluent. While the available research on leadership and govenance does not separate disadvantaged areas in the North from elsewhere in the country, the English Indices of Deprivation list Middlesbrough, Knowsley, Kingston upon Hull, Liverpool and Manchester, all in the North, as the most deprived areas in the country.

- Headteachers appear less inclined to move out of their current geographical area than teachers, perhaps reflecting their more settled family commitments and the need to consider job opportunities for partners. This may make it harder to attract head teachers to some local areas in the North.

- Ofsted (2015) report that middle leaders in schools with high numbers of disadvantaged pupils perform less well than middle leaders in other schools, perhaps reflecting the high turnover of staff and the consequent lack of support from more experienced leaders. As noted above, the North has a number of areas of deprivation.

Teacher training, recruitment and retention

- With increased competition for good quality newly trained teachers, many new teachers opt for well-performing schools in attractive areas even though the literature suggests that teachers are relatively mobile after qualifying. As noted above, the North has a number of areas of high deprivation and a higher proportion of lower-performing schools which may struggle to attract sufficient high-quality teachers.

- Once recruited, teachers in disadvantaged schools are more likely to leave, perhaps because they feel they lack support and opportunities for development. This may influence local shortages in the North which, as noted above, has a number of areas of deprivation.

- Given the evidence in the literature for the difference that high-quality leaders and effective, experienced teaching staff can make to pupils' attainment, tackling recruitment, retention and professional development issues needs to be a priority for the Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy.

School structures

- There is substantial variation in school performance between different local authorities which, in the research we have reviewed, is not explained by their rate of academisation. Ofsted's annual report (2015) points out that the weakest local areas vary considerably in the percentage of secondary schools which are academies; for example, all secondary schools in Doncaster and just half of Knowsley's have academy status, both poorly performing areas.

- The performance of multi-academy trusts (MATs) generally reflect the performance of schools in the geographical area in which they operate, with all but one of the most successful MATs with high levels of disadvantaged pupils confined to London, the South East and the West Midlands (Hutchings et al 2016). DfE data (2016) also identifies two MATs in the North with above average performance – Tapton School Academy Trust and Bright Futures Education Trust.

- With teaching schools now taking on much of the responsibility for improvement in a school-led collaborative system, data published by the Department for Education shows that coverage by teaching schools is patchy with some areas in the North poorly served. Despite these challenges, learning from those schools, academy chains, local authorities and MATs who have performed well can help schools and policy makers understand effective strategies for supporting disadvantaged pupils. This is key to improving educational performance in the North because the challenge for schools in the North seems to be largely one of improving pupil attainment for this group, even in schools which are otherwise performing well.

Provision and Admissions

- Identifying and understanding effective provision and admissions is far from straightforward. Schools' intakes vary significantly and there are large variations in the numbers of disadvantaged students in schools across the North.

- Analysis of DfE's School and College Performance Tables reveals shows that in the North disadvantaged pupils generally do better in schools with relatively few disadvantaged pupils than they do in schools with large numbers of disadvantaged pupils. Nonetheless, Clifton et al (2016) identify a number of secondary schools in the North which, despite large numbers of disadvantaged pupils, are 'beacons of success'. These schools could provide a source of effective strategies to tackle disadvantage and low attainment that could be shared across the North.

Language and cultural barriers

- There is a significant number of ethnic minority pupils in the northern powerhouse region, many of whom are significantly underperforming in their GCSEs, compared with national averages.

- There are language and cultural barriers to pupil learning in some northern schools, which must be overcome in order to develop effective pedagogical knowledge and strategies.

- In the case of ethnic minority pupils, bilingual teachers can play an import role in bridging the gap between teachers and children and parents for whom English is an additional language. There is therefore a need for schools to ensure they have the capacity to deliver teaching in a range of languages, possibly using utilising native speakers who live in local communities, as in the North West Consortium of the Routes into Languages initiative.

Special educational needs

- Although several studies are centred on pupils with SEN in schools in the North, these studies are largely concerned with generic issues that apply across England.

Previous initiatives (lessons learned)

- Previous initiatives designed to raise attainment and narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in schools in areas of the North demonstrate the potential of area-level initiatives involving collaboration within and between schools, carefully matched through analysis of school performance data, to improve school performance.

- Models of leadership in schools that can facilitate school improvement are those which emphasise an over-arching vision, strategy and flexibility.

- It is critical that national policy makers allow substantial flexibility at the local level in order that educational practitioners are able to analyse their particular circumstances and determine priorities accordingly.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1: Background

Improving academic education to age 19 is a key component of efforts to create a 'Northern Powerhouse', centred on the 'core cities' of Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield and Newcastle. It is widely recognised that in order to maximise the potential of the North of England, it will be necessary to improve educational performance, especially for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those in underperforming schools and colleges (Clifton et al 2016; Ofsted 2015; Budget speech 2016).

The Chancellor announced in the March 2016 budget that the government will invest £20m a year of new funding in a Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy, and commissioned Sir Nick Weller to lead an in-depth review into transforming education across the Northern Powerhouse. This will complement and build on the government's wider focus on achieving excellence as set out in the Educational Excellence Everywhere White Paper. The review will look specifically at Northern Powerhouse regions (the North West, the North East and Yorkshire and Humber) because there seems to be a particular concentration of underperforming areas in the North, and ensuring access to an excellent education for all pupils is critical for the long term success of the Northern Powerhouse.

It is envisaged that the strategy will:

- boost investment to turn round performance in the most challenging areas;

- invest more funding to see the best academy chains expand and to develop new sponsors in the North; and

- look at further ways to get and keep the best teachers in these areas.

1.2: Research Objectives

The primary objective of this project is to synthesise available evidence on academic education to age 19 in the north, specifically:

- Identifying, defining and understanding problems with the quality of education in the north of England including its causes;

- Identifying and understanding effective provision in the north and its causes;

- Identifying and assessing the impact of interventions which have specifically tried to address issues resulting from northern-specific problems.

The literature review will be used to inform Sir Nick Weller's recommendations, including decisions on how to best allocate funding, ensuring good value for money by targeting resources at the approaches and methods that have the most potential for success.

Section 2: Methodology

2.1: Search protocol

We began by developing a clear understanding of the policy background and context for the Literature Review. This included gathering information from policy leads at the DfE and published Government information that helped identify search terms and inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature review.

The protocol for the literature review was then developed in consultation with the Department for Education. This detailed the procedures to be followed including: the search terms[3]; the locations/sources to be searched; the screens each study should pass through for inclusion in the review; and the processes for recording and storing references and summarising literature. This ensured consistency and transparency in the execution of the review.

Evidence was gathered through online searches and reference searches. Using the agreed protocol, we searched a wide range of online databases and websites such as the Education Research Abstracts Online and Education Resources Information Centre online digital library (ERIC) which offer electronic access to most published literature. [4]

We also undertook a web search for research studies (qualitative and quantitative), relevant reports (for example from Ofsted, think tanks and charities) and blogs and articles from authoritative sources.

The list of search terms and phrases was updated as the review progressed and additions were recorded and used by both reviewers. The searches were limited to studies published in the English language.

We supplemented the search through searching the reference section of particularly relevant pieces to identify other pertinent articles. Resources such as Google Scholar allowed a forward search to find relevant, cited articles.

Initial searches showed a limited number of comparative studies that identified issues particular to schools in the North rather than elsewhere in the country but a larger number that involved research in northern schools or which explored issues that had been identified in comparative studies as being prevalent in northern schools but not restricted to them. Consequently, the decision was taken to include these studies for

---

[3] See Appendix 1 for the list of search terms used.
[4] See Appendix 2 for a full list of databases and journals searched.

additional perspectives on barriers to attainment and strategies for improvement in schools in the North.

2.2: Study Selection

Once studies had been identified, they were assessed for eligibility against the following inclusion criteria (using a two-stage approach to reviewing the title and abstract and full text):

- published in 2006 or later;

- involved studies that included schools in northern England; or

- included research, strategies, approaches or models that reflect the themes identified in the initial review of studies relating to the performance of Northern schools.

Manuscripts were retrieved for those that met the inclusion criteria following review of the full text on screen. Details of articles not meeting the inclusion criteria were set aside and saved, but not deleted. For excluded studies, we recorded what the practical reasons were for their non-consideration.

Once all potentially eligible articles had been collected, the next step was to examine the articles more closely to assess their quality. This was done to ensure that the best available evidence was used in the review. Particular attention was paid to information obtained from websites, which, while published on the web, have often not passed any sort of quality standards checks. (NB: Editorials, newspaper articles and other forms of popular media were excluded).

In total, 65 documents were included in the review (34 peer reviewed journal articles and 31 research reports and other data sources).

Section 3: Overview of education in the North

3.1: Introduction

This section of the report seeks to identify the evidence on how schools in the north of England differ in some respects from those elsewhere in the country. The themes that emerge from this section are then explored in greater depth in subsequent chapters.

The North of England consists of three regions – the North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber. The northern powerhouse agenda seeks to redress the imbalance between economic performance in the North in comparison with the rest of the country. Two recent reports (Ofsted 2015; Clifton et al 2016) have drawn attention to the comparatively poor performance of schools in the North especially in respect of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, making the case that school improvement in the region is a necessary part of realising the northern powerhouse ambitions.

In the annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted 2015), Sir Michael Wilshaw observed that:

> "What we are seeing is nothing short of a divided nation after the age of 11. Children in the North and Midlands are much less likely to attend a good or outstanding secondary school than those in the rest of the country" (page 9).

3.2: Statistics

A number of data sources indicate areas where schools in the North may be performing less well overall than those in the South. These include the number of schools that are good or outstanding; achievement at GCSE, including English and maths, and at level 3 (A level or equivalent); the number of pupils going on to good universities[5], particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds; the achievement of particular groups of pupils, including those from a minority ethnic background; and schools' ability to attract teachers.

All of these areas will be explored in greater depth in the subsequent chapters of this report. The following statistics are indicative of some of the challenges for schools:

---

[5] This is defined by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), as the top third of higher education institutions (HEIs) when grouped by mean UCAS tariff score from the top three A level grades of entrants.

1. **Poorer performing secondary schools.** 79% of secondary schools in the South of England are good or outstanding, compared with only 68% in the North and Midlands. If schools in these regions were performing as well as those in the South, 160,000 more children would attend good schools. Seven out of ten of the worst performing local authority areas for good or outstanding secondary schools are in the North. For primary schools however, only four in ten of the local areas with the worst performing schools were in the North. (Ofsted 2015).

2. **More low-performing local authorities.** There are 16 local authority areas in England where less than 60% of the children attend good or outstanding secondary schools, have lower than national GCSE attainment and make less than national levels of expected progress. Eleven of these are in the North: Middlesbrough; Hartlepool; Blackpool; Oldham; Doncaster; Bradford; Barnsley; Liverpool; Knowsley; St Helens; and Salford (Ofsted 2015)

3. **Lower attainment at KS4 and A level.** All three regions in the North (see above) were below the national average in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A* to C grades at GCSE including English and maths and the gap was larger than would be expected even allowing for higher levels of disadvantaged pupils. All three regions in the North had fewer than the average percentage of pupils achieving grades AAB or better at A level with at least two in subjects that the Russell Group of universities regard as 'facilitating subjects' because choosing them at advanced level leaves open a wide range of options for university study (Biology, Chemistry, English Literature, Geography, History, Physics, Modern and classical languages, maths and further maths) (Ofsted 2015).

4. **Lower Level 3 attainment.** The North East region and Yorkshire and the Humber were the two lowest ranked regions in the country in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving at level 3 by age 19, with the North West matching the national average (Ofsted 2015).

5. **Pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds do less well**. For example, in 2014/15, only 46.7% of Black pupils in the North West achieved 5+ GCSEs at A* to C including English and maths compared with 52.6% nationally; and in Yorkshire and the Humber, only 49.9% of Asian pupils met this measure compared with 61.9% nationally (DfE 2016).

6. **Fewer pupils go on to higher level study.** Destinations of pupils after Key Stage 5 in 2014 show that a lower percentage of pupils in the North went on to study at one of the top third of HEIs than for the South. Fewer pupils in the North that are eligible for free school meals went on to higher level study in 2014 compared with the national average (DfE 2015).

7. **Higher percentage of young people who are NEET.** The percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) was 5.7% in the North East and 4.8% in both the North West and Yorkshire and Humber. This compares with 4.2% for England as a whole and these regions represented the top three regions in terms of NEET rate.

These differences cannot be entirely explained by disadvantage as the regions were outperformed by London, which has a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (Ofsted 2015). While acknowledging that the north of England needs to improve its educational performance, particularly for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, Clifton et al (2016) caution that:

> "Statistics for the whole of the North, however, obscure important differences about school performance. Our analysis of education data reveals a more complicated story about why northern schools are falling behind and the role that policy should play in addressing this issue" (page 4).

This is echoed by Sir Michael Wilshaw (Ofsted 2015) who acknowledges that there are some schools in the North and Midlands achieving excellent results in very challenging circumstances; understanding how they do this may be key to understanding how to replicate these results in other schools in the North.

3.3: Factors affecting school performance in the North

Ofsted (2015), pointing to attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and the high proportion of good and outstanding primary schools in the North, suggests that many pupils are being let down by their secondary schools. While acknowledging that education equalities widen more sharply at secondary level, Clifton et al (2016) draw attention to the 'early years gap' between children from poorer families and more affluent homes which is almost twice as large in the North as it is in London.

Ofsted (2015) highlight a combination of a culture of low expectations and a tolerance of low-level disruption and other poor behaviour in some poor performing schools in the North as a key factor. Clifton et al (2016), however, argue that concentrating on poorly performing schools may distract from the degree of variation in outcomes within schools, referring to the gap of 22 percentage points in attainment between pupils on free school meals and their more affluent peers in northern schools rated as outstanding:

> "Focusing on failing schools is important but will not be sufficient to eradicate educational inequality. Even good and outstanding schools have attainment gaps" (page 3).

School types do not appear to be a factor according to Ofsted (2015) whose annual

report points out that the most poorly performing local authorities vary considerably in the percentage of secondary schools which are academies, with all of Doncaster's secondary schools having academy status and just half of Knowlesley's, both poor performing areas.

> "Academisation can create the conditions for remarkable improvements but structural reform can only do so much" (page 13).

However, Ofsted's Regional Directors in the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber reported that the more isolated schools in their region were neither linking up with more successful neighbouring schools nor becoming part of effective multi-academy trusts (MATs). This is of concern because Ofsted report that schools that are part of a MAT are less likely to decline in performance than standalone academies (Ofsted 2015).

Ofsted (2015) draws attention to the shortage of high-quality leadership in schools in disadvantaged areas in the North and, while acknowledging that the best multi-academy trusts and teaching school alliances have taken steps to grow their own leaders, notes that this is not uniform across the country.

There are also regional differences in the quality of teaching (Ofsted 2015), with only 69% of teaching good or outstanding in secondary schools in the North and Midlands compared with 80% in the South. In primary schools, the quality of teaching is more uniform across the country.

Ofsted (2015) also found a marked difference in the ability of schools in socially disadvantaged areas to recruit new teachers compared with schools in more affluent areas. This is a particular issue for the North which has comparatively high levels of disadvantage. 50% of headteachers in relatively affluent areas said they were not able to recruit enough good staff, but this rose to 77% in the most challenging areas. With increased competition for good quality newly trained teachers, many new teachers opt for well-performing schools in attractive areas.

The Sutton Trust (2015) describe able pupils who do not achieve as well as expected at GCSE as 'missing talent'[6]. They found that:

- 15% of highly able pupils who score in the top 10% nationally at age 11 fail to achieve in the top 25% at GCSE

- Boys, and particularly pupil premium eligible boys, are most likely to be in this 'missing talent' group

---

[6] Defined as pupils scoring in the top 10% nationally in their Key Stage 2 (KS2) tests, yet who five years later receive a set of GCSE results that place them outside the top 25% of pupils.

- Highly able pupil premium pupils achieve half a grade less than other highly able pupils, on average, with a very long tail to underachievement
- Highly able pupil premium pupils are less likely to be taking GCSEs in history, geography, triple sciences or a language

Of the 20 local authorities with the greatest degree of missing talent, ten were in the North; of the 20 local authorities with the lowest level of missing talent, only two were in the North.

Ofsted (2015) point out that disadvantaged pupils fare differently across the country with London pupils eligible for free school meals just as likely to progress to university as their more advantaged peers whereas in the North East, for example, the most disadvantaged pupils are 13 percentage points behind their more advantaged peers.

In the next sections of the report, we look in more detail at each of the potential contributing factors to lower pupil attainment in the North and any evidence for ways in which the challenges have been overcome.

Section 4: Socio-economic disadvantage and deprivation

There is a strong association between socio-economic disadvantage and low attainment (Clifton and Cook 2012; OECD 2014; Macleod et al 2015). A key element of successive governments' education policies has been to narrow the performance gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils across England. The definition of a 'disadvantaged' pupil used in DfE's (2015/2016) School Performance Tables is a pupil who has been eligible for free school meals in the past six years, who has been looked after continuously for one day or more, or who has been adopted from care. The performance gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils is especially apparent in the North. There are higher proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals across the North and Midlands than the South and East (Ofsted 2015: 41) and the performance gap is wider in the North. Differences begin to emerge at early years foundation stage assessment and continue through to GCSE level and beyond (Cox and Raikes 2015).

4.1: Primary school attainment for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds

Recent analyses of school attainment in England indicate that overall the North performs relatively well on primary school attainment for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (Clifton 2016; Ofsted 2015; Perera et al 2016). However, as Clifton et al (2016) note, there are significant variations across the region:

> "Nationally, 66 per cent of children eligible for free school meals attain level 4 or above at KS2 in reading, mathematics and writing, compared to 83 per cent of other children, an attainment gap of 17 percentage points. Those in the North East and North West actually perform better than the national average, with 67 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals meeting the benchmark. Meanwhile those from Yorkshire and the Humber perform below the national average, with just 62 per cent meeting the benchmark" (page 21).

Drawing on DfE (2015b) data, Clifton et al (2016) also note that the gap between attainment by pupils at KS2 eligible and not eligible for free school meals varies widely between local authorities across the North:

> "The North East perform(s) particularly well, with all but three of its local authorities scoring above the national average on primary school attainment for pupils eligible for free school meals. Some local authorities achieve results that would be the envy of many London boroughs – in Redcar and Cleveland, 71 per cent of disadvantaged

children attain level 4 or above in all three subjects, while 91 per cent of other pupils attain at this level. Meanwhile the picture is rather more worrying in the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber, where more than two-thirds of local authorities have an attainment gap between poorer and wealthier pupils that is above the national average. In Yorkshire and the Humber, just one local authority – Kingston-Upon-Hull – has a rate of attainment for disadvantaged pupils which is above the national average for similar pupils" (page 21).

Nonetheless, around half of the North's local authorities do outperform the national average for disadvantaged children at KS2 and, in view of this, Clifton et al (2016) suggest that it is important to ensure that the expertise of those local authorities (for example, Redcar and Cleveland, Trafford and Warrington) is "not lost as more schools become academies".

4.2: Secondary school attainment for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds

As noted above, several studies point to a more distinct 'North-South divide' in the pattern in secondary performance (Clifton et al 2016; Ofsted 2015; Perera 2016), with secondary school attainment in the North lagging behind that in London. Overall secondary school attainment is lower in the North, and the gap between attainment by pupils eligible and ineligible for free school meals is particularly severe (Clifton et al 2016: 24). According to Ofsted (2015: 25), the lower performance across the North (and Midlands) cannot be fully accounted for by differences in school funding or socio-economic disadvantage because all pupils do less well overall across these regions.

Ofsted (2015: 41) believes that "low expectations" in many secondary schools in the North (and Midlands) are having a negative impact for all pupils and that "this has a disproportionate effect on the most disadvantaged", resulting in educational inequalities widening sharply" (Clifton et al 2016).

DfE's (2016a) revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2014 to 2015 data show that only 34% of disadvantaged children in the North achieve five GCSEs grades A* to C, including English and mathematics compared with a national average of 36.8% and 48.3% in London (see Clifton et al 2016). These data also show that the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in terms of secondary school attainment is 30.9 percentage points in the North compared with 28.3 nationally and 20.5 in London (DfE 2016a - see also Ofsted 2015).

Clifton et al's (2016) analysis of the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged secondary school pupils in the North broken down by local authority area

reveals that poorer pupils are falling behind across the region. It also shows that the size of the attainment gap varies widely between local authorities.

> "The North East and Yorkshire and the Humber perform particularly badly in terms of the size of the attainment gap. The North West has a few examples of authorities which have a narrower attainment gap than the national average (including Blackburn with Darwen, Halton, Bury, Bolton, Manchester and Rochdale) but very few are able both to achieve this and sustain high overall standards. As with primary schools, several large cities struggle to raise attainment among disadvantaged pupils, in addition to coastal and satellite towns" (Clifton et al 2016: 24-25).

According to Clifton et al (2016), outcomes for disadvantaged secondary school pupils in local authorities in the North are rarely above the national average of 36.7%, and less than 3% of northern secondary schools have succeeded in eradicating the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers; they note that: "Not a single northern local authority matches London's average" (Clifton et al 2016). Moreover, the Sutton Trust's (2015) list of the 20 local authorities with high levels of disadvantaged most-able pupils who are not reaching their potential includes ten in the North compared with four in the South and six in other regions (Sutton Trust 2015).

Clifton et al (2016) also note that the struggle to raise attainment amongst disadvantaged pupils at secondary school age in the North arises in some major cities, as well as coastal towns and satellite towns:

> "(P)olicymakers have tended to single out deprived coastal towns and suburbs (such as Blackpool and Knowsley) as a cause for concern. But perhaps surprisingly, our analysis reveals that the stronger outcomes for deprived pupils in city areas – a regional version of the 'London effect' – does not emerge for the North. Greater Manchester and Liverpool do stand out within the North West, but within Yorkshire and the Humber the bottom half of the rankings are dominated by major cities, including Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford and Doncaster. Similarly, within the North East, Newcastle and Middlesbrough have some of the lowest results for disadvantaged pupils" (page 21).

Clifton et al (2016) suggest that policymakers and practitioners should keep this firmly in mind when considering how to tackle education inequality in the North.

The CentreForum's First Annual Report into the state of English Education (Perera et al 2016) does however point to some positive signs of improvement in the North in terms of the progress of disadvantaged pupils at secondary school:

> "The North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber have raised progress at Key Stage 4 [aged 15-16] for pupils who are FSM but not EAL as much as London has, and more than elsewhere. This improvement (which is also evident at

Key Stage 2 [aged 7-11]) has also been reflected among white pupils within this group in particular (our closest proxy for white working class pupils)" (Perera et al 2016, executive summary).

Clifton et al (2016) also highlight some sources of strength in the northern school system. Specifically, they identify 21 secondary schools which they classify as 'beacons of success' for their ability to achieve good results and narrow attainment gaps between pupils who are eligible and those who are not eligible for free school meals despite serving disadvantaged communities. Clifton et al (2016) also mention initiatives to drive improvement in the North, including the expansion of Teach First to attract high calibre graduates into teaching in northern towns and the creation of the Blackpool and Liverpool Challenge (Clifton et al 2016: 45-46).

There is a consensus in the literature that improving secondary schools in the North must include a particular focus on better performance for the most disadvantaged pupils (e.g. Clifton et al 2016; Ofsted 2015). In terms of what this should entail, as noted above, Clifton et al (2016) argue that government policy must not just focus on poor performing schools because even some schools rated as good and outstanding schools by Ofsted have large attainment gaps between pupils on free school meals and their peers from more affluent backgrounds (Clifton et al 2016):

> "The average gap is very similar at schools graded 'outstanding' and those graded as 'requiring improvement', because while disadvantaged pupils perform better at outstanding schools, all the other pupils do too. In short, these schools are good at raising overall attainment, but at least some of them are *less* successful at closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. Even if the government was able ensure that every school was rated 'outstanding' – which of course would be very difficult to do – this data suggests that the attainment gap would persist" (page 28).

In view of this, Clifton et al (2016) argue that policymakers should focus on tackling variation within all schools in the North and that this should involve a greater focus on improving how schools deploy their resources to ensure that disadvantaged pupils benefit from good teachers and pupil premium funding, and on how schools monitor and intervene when pupils fall behind (such as the effective use of data and rolling out proven pedagogical interventions or catch-up tuition). They also argue that policymakers should pay particular attention to addressing attainment in northern secondary schools with large numbers of deprived pupils because their analysis of DfE's (2016b) school and college performance tables reveals that achievement among disadvantaged pupils in these schools tends to be lower than in secondary schools with a lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils (Clifton et al 2016).

Clifton et al's conclusions chime with those of Ofsted (2015), who contend that the highest priority should be securing high quality teaching for disadvantaged pupils and emphasise the importance of effective leadership and governance in achieving this:

> "Because tackling disadvantage relies on high-quality leadership that can create the right culture, raising expectations and therefore attainment for the most disadvantaged in these regions will require stronger leadership at all levels" (page 41).

In addition, Ofsted (2015) argues that governors require a good understanding of the available performance information and should use it to hold senior leaders in their schools to account and ensure that there is a focus on how well the most disadvantaged pupils are performing.

4.3: Recent teacher inquiry projects

Two recent peer-reviewed journal articles report the findings of teacher inquiry projects[7] that have involved teachers investigating the impact of different ways of addressing attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in their schools in the North. These studies provide insights into the perceptions of teachers in the North in relation to both the performance gap between pupils who are eligible and not eligible for FSM and how this should be tackled. Both of the studies draw on the work of Milner (2013)[8], who argues that perceived achievement gaps are the result of other gaps - such as gaps of employment opportunity, wealth and income, nutrition and healthcare - and that the best way to assist disadvantaged pupils is to focus attention on these other gaps in order to enhance the quality of the pupils' experiences, resources and teaching.

Nuttall and Doherty (2014) report on a project undertaken by a research-active teacher and a university academic partner in a primary school that serves disadvantaged communities on the outskirts of a de-industrialised city in the north of England. The school's RAISE online quantitative data[9] highlights a significant achievement gap between disadvantaged students identified by FSM and other students at the school. The

---

[7] Teacher inquiry projects involve teachers conducting research into the impact of their teaching on their pupils.
[8] Milner in turn cites Irvine (2010).
[9] RAISE online is a secure web-based system that enables schools, local authorities, inspectors, dioceses, academy trusts and governors to analyse school performance data in depth.

main priorities of the school's Pupil Premium funding plan[10] , which is designed to address this problem, involve intervention through the provision of (1) more adult support in class to work with underachieving students, (2) one-to-one tutoring for students in KS2 to prepare them for SATs testing, and (3) teachers with more time to be able to run small group or individual reading, writing and maths programmes. An early draft question that came to drive the teacher inquiry project was: "can this 'achievement gap' be rectified by such 'add-ons' implemented by the school?"(Nuttall and Doherty 2014)

The project focussed on a small group of white British boys in receipt of free school meals, who are identified by the school as disaffected and as a consequence vulnerable in terms of their educational achievement. The boys often disrupt whole-class learning, cause problems due to their apparent immaturity and poor relationships with others, and require large amounts of adult support. Despite numerous interventions run by the school and outside agencies, including the school's Pupil premium funding plan, these boys continue to underachieve.

Nuttall and Doherty's (2014) project points to the fact that the majority of the white British boys in the sample vulnerable group are affected by high deprivation and have gaps in financial security, family security and emotional security which must be identified, understood and addressed in order for these students to engage with their school and learning. Nuttall and Doherty (2014) conclude:

> "As Lupton (2006) tells us, achieving success in a school in a disadvantaged area is difficult and requires tailored practices and additional resources. Therefore, high quality teaching and support frameworks tailored to the needs of the white British boys highlighted here will be required for them to achieve academic success. The task for the research active teacher is to be alert to the data that presents a certain conclusion whereas delving much deeper into important contextual factors of a school, 'peeling back the wallpaper', can expose a very different picture" (page 814).

Firth et al (2014) adopt a similar position. The authors are a team of research-active teachers who are also senior leaders in a large, urban, comprehensive high school in the North of England that progressed from being graded as a 'failing' school by Ofsted in 2009 to being judged a 'good' school in 2013. The school draws students from many areas of the northern city in which it is located, including those marked by social

[10] The pupil premium was introduced by the coalition government in 2011 to increase social mobility and reduce the gap in performance between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers. Schools receive funding for each disadvantaged pupil and can use the funding flexibly, in the best interests of eligible pupils" (Macleod et al 2015: 8).

disadvantage and deprivation. The team's work developed in response to Ofsted's recommendation that teachers at the school should identify features of "effective pedagogies" in their own subject-department lessons, with a view to disseminating these through school in an attempt to progress further.

Firth et al (2014) begin by noting that the composition of the intake at the school shows great diversity and, citing Milner (2013), suggest this raises the possibility of a wide range of 'gaps' that must be identified, named, and addressed in order for achievement results to improve. Like Nuttall and Doherty (2014), Firth et al (2014) seek to help disadvantaged pupils by improving the quality of their experiences, resources and teaching. In this case, the aim was to improve the quality of teaching and learning by identifying pedagogies that engage students in the classroom and give them opportunities to use language to think about what they are learning and to explain their ideas. They conclude that good learning takes place when: Students self-regulate and direct tasks in the lesson; questions are used by teachers to promote and develop student thinking; there is high intellectual quality; and students see the value of what they are learning and its connectedness to the world beyond the classroom.

However, Firth et al (2014) report that despite the pedagogical improvements they have made thus far, the data used to measure the success of the school still reads unfavourably when compared to similar schools nationally. In so far as the progress made towards GCSE results remains the measure of the school's success, another shared concern is that the school's apparent efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning and coincidentally the behaviour of the students, is not really recognised until it shows up in the quantitative data:

> "On the one hand, Ofsted can recognise (the) school as providing students with a 'good' education while, simultaneously, RAISEonline data shows students are seriously underachieving against national averages. On the other, the progress the school has made may well take time to filter through to the GCSE results used by RAISEonline to measure student progress. This apparent contradiction highlights the difficulty in measuring the students' achievement, which is inevitably tied to their learning experiences and quality teaching" (page 881).

The co-authors challenge what 'counts' as knowledge, achievement and success, and argue that constraints placed on the school by budget, the standardised reform agenda, and high stakes accountability restrict attempts by the school to work in a more creative way as it strives to raise achievement and aims for an 'outstanding' judgement from Ofsted.

Section 5: Leadership and governance

5.1: Capacity and recruitment

The availability of high-quality leaders is identified by Ofsted (2015) as a problem, particularly for secondary schools, in challenging areas across the country. A National Governors' Association survey from September 2015 reported that 43% of respondents found it difficult to recruit senior staff. The Future Leaders Trust (2016) suggests that demand for headteachers will rise, fuelled by plans to create 500 new Free Schools; the creation of new CEO and executive head roles in multi-academy trusts and the conversion of schools into sponsored academies. They estimate that this could result in over 1,000 additional vacancies over the next five years.

The shortage of high-quality leadership is most acute in schools in the North and Midlands - of the 49 secondary schools in the most disadvantaged areas that have inadequate leadership and management, 41 were in the North and Midlands (Ofsted 2015). Ofsted comments that, while devolving to schools the responsibility for developing new leaders works well in high performing multi-academy trusts and teaching alliances, arrangements need to be better targeted to ensure schools in challenging circumstances are able to attract and develop good leaders.

Persuading head teachers to come to challenging schools may prove to be difficult. Earley et al (2012) and The Future Leaders Trust (2015) found that people are less likely to apply and relocate for headteacher positions in relatively isolated or economically deprived areas because there are few jobs for partners and longer travel times for those who commute. As mentioned above, Clifton et al (2016) point out that underperforming areas in the North are not confined to relatively isolated coastal or rural areas but that many cities and towns, including Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, Doncaster, Newcastle and Middlesborough, have some of the lowest results in the country for disadvantaged pupils. The report's authors make the point that unfavourable Ofsted judgements make it harder for schools to attract school leaders (and teachers) and that having access to high-quality staff is a key driver of school improvement, resulting in a cycle of under-performance for those unable to attract the right people.

5.2: Quality of leadership

As noted above, Ofsted (2015) report that it is secondary schools in the North, rather than those in the primary phase, that perform particularly badly in comparison with the rest of the country. Clifton et al (2016), however, point out that, while there is undoubtedly a problem with secondary school performance, there is also considerable variation in primary school performance in the North. Although some local authorities in the North

West and North East outperform most London boroughs, the majority of local authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber have results below the national average. Ofsted (2015) singles out Bradford in particular as a local authority area where standards have been far too low for many years, across both primary and secondary schools, with the proportion of pupils in good or outstanding schools continuing to decrease. While Ofsted has found that the local authority's support arrangements are not good enough, they also found that there is insufficient high-quality leadership to help build capacity across schools in the city through the provision of school-to-school support.

Of course, factors other than the quality of leadership may contribute to the variable performance of primary and secondary schools but research indicates that leadership plays a vital role in improving pupil attainment. The Effective Leadership and Pupil Outcomes Project examined the work of school leaders in a range of primary and secondary schools nationally recognised as having achieved success in terms of improvement in pupil attainment measures between 2003 to 2005. In reviewing the outcomes, Day et al (2009) found that:

> "There are statistically significant empirical and qualitatively robust associations between heads' educational values, qualities and their strategic actions and improvement in school conditions leading to improvements in pupil outcomes" (page 1).

Although the report found no one single leadership model to be effective as this depended on the school context, phase and stage of development, it did note that, in more challenging schools, successful heads give greater attention to establishing, maintaining and sustaining school-wide policies for pupil behaviour, motivation and engagement, teaching standards, the physical environment, improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and establishing cultures of care and achievement. These findings are echoed by Ofsted (2015), who note that poorer performance in the North is in part due to secondary school leaders having low expectations of pupils as well as tolerating poor behaviour and low level disruption. Ofsted found that three quarters of the secondary schools in England that are inadequate for behaviour and safety are in the North and Midlands, arguing that:

> "It is no coincidence that the achievement of five GCSEs grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, at these schools is 21 percentage points below schools in the North and Midlands with good or outstanding behaviour" (page 11).

In a report into Key Stage 3 (2015), Ofsted found that a particular problem in less effective schools was the extent to which pupils fell behind in the early years of secondary as leadership efforts were concentrated on Key Stage 4 and GCSEs. This led to pupils being insufficiently challenged and often taught by non-specialists as school leaders prioritised the staffing of Key Stages 4 and 5. This view is echoed by Clifton et al

(2016) in case studies of successful schools in the North, where one school recognised that "GCSE outcomes are established in Year 7". One school in West Yorkshire has introduced a formal 'graduation' process at the end of Key Stage 3 which celebrates pupils meeting their learning targets in key subjects as well as showing a positive attitude to learning. Inspectors found that this motivates pupils and provides a stepping stone for future aspiration to higher education (Ofsted 2015). Ofsted also found that schools that did well for disadvantaged pupils were very clear about pupils' starting points at Key Stage 3 through good relationships with feeder schools and that this avoided pupils repeating learning from the primary phase instead of building on this to progress.

Ofsted's annual report (2015) identified four themes in those schools which had improved significantly:

1.   School leaders identified weaknesses and, often drawing on the support of others, put steps in place to tackle those weaknesses.

2.   Leaders and middle leaders put a range of mechanisms in place to improve teaching including better use of data; strong and more focused performance management; and effective systems for checking the quality of teaching and providing feedback to pupils.

3.   The developing of a school culture in which staff and pupils aimed for excellence.

4.   Teachers, leaders and governors all had high expectations of all pupils.

As noted above, the higher proportion of poorly performing schools in the North and the higher levels of disadvantage compared with elsewhere in the country suggest that these findings may be of particular significance for some schools in the region.

As noted above, Clifton et al (2016) found that the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in northern secondary schools tends to be higher where they form a relatively lower proportion of the school's intake. Nonetheless, the report's authors identified a number of secondary schools in the North which, despite large numbers of disadvantaged pupils, they describe as 'beacons of success.' In case studies of two of these schools, the following approaches were noted:

1.   Ensuring pupils are fully engaged is a priority for both schools. Teachers in one school are nominated as 'champions' to lead on provision for pupils with specific needs as part of a strategy to narrow the gap and ensure that pupils who might otherwise become disaffected are fully engaged. In the other case study school, engagement is also prioritised through clear expectations and extensive strategies to involve all students in school life. and a number of teachers have lead practitioner status in core subjects.

2.   In one of the case study schools, central to success is the embedding of its mission statement in all documents and procedures which include practical actions for ways in which that mission can be realised.

3.   Both schools have high expectations of all pupils, ensuring that disadvantage is not an excuse for not challenging pupils in their learning.

4.   Participation in extracurricular activities funded by the school and involving significant investments of staff time are seen as important in building 'cultural capital' and ensuring that pupils recognise that they have choices in life in both schools .

5.   Peer-facilitated CPD for staff tailored to the school's challenges with a focus on contextualised pedagogy and overcoming barriers to learning is provided in one school.

6.   Evidence-based practice is important in both schools, with staff in one engaged with research and theory relevant to their pupils.

7.   One of the schools works with other schools within its academy chain on school improvement activities.

8.   Working with families to help them support their children's learning is a core approach in one school, alongside helping parents with practical steps to raise aspirations. In the other, careers guidance and skill-building is a major theme, whether this leads to an apprenticeship or Oxbridge entrance. The school recognises that pupils' families may not have the knowledge to help their children towards professional careers.

5.3 Middle Leaders

Both of the case study schools cited in Clifton et al (2016) made effective use of teachers as subject leaders. Ofsted (2015) identify persistent weaknesses in middle leadership as a common thread in schools that fail to improve, seeing this as linked to the problems some schools are experiencing in securing permanent, high-performing teachers and leaders. While these schools were disproportionately in the North and the Midlands, they were not necessarily in areas of the highest disadvantage but did have a higher number of pupils on free school meals than other schools in the local area. Often too, they were smaller than average secondary schools. What stood out for inspectors was the variable quality of middle leaders, manifesting as a lack of accountability and insufficient rigour in monitoring teaching and standards in their areas of responsibility. In some cases, poor middle leadership was linked to relative inexperience and frequent staff turnover,

suggesting these schools may experience difficulties in attracting and retaining good staff in competition with other local schools with less challenging intakes.

John Howson, writing in a report on headteacher shortages for the Future Leaders Trust (2016), recognised the importance both of identifying and training potential leaders and providing support and recognition for existing leaders:

> "Leading a school will only become an attractive career option again once it is accepted that leaders themselves need support and recognition for their work. Increased support will attract greater numbers willing to take on the role, but we also need to implement early identification, support and training for potential headteachers – especially if we are to fill vacancies in the most challenging schools" (page 6).

5.4: Leadership Models

In a review of an Education Action Zone[11] (EAZ) in St Helens in the North West, Gkolia et al (2009) saw an important dimension of EAZ practice as being the focus on partnership and distributed leadership or 'systems leadership' (that is leadership that extends beyond the school's hierarchies and the boundaries of an individual school). Such forms of leadership recognise the complex and interdependent problems faced by the education system and that to effect sustained change, effective leadership at all levels (including at middle leader levels) is required.

Gkolia et al (2009) reported that participation in an EAZ had given many staff at all levels the opportunity to develop leadership skills through organising and managing activities within the network:

> "In this way a loop of increased capacity and confidence – enhanced senior leader delegation – was created" (page 140).

5.5: Governance

Ofsted (2015) report that the best governing bodies are increasingly professional, with members who have the skills and knowledge needed to oversee the running of complex

---

[11] EAZs were partnerships usually formed between schools, their LEA and other local organisations, especially from the business community, and other agencies, such as higher education institutions. They were set up to tackle problems of underachievement and social exclusion in disadvantaged areas by devising innovative methods and strategies that would involve disaffected pupils more fully in education and improve their academic performance. The EAZ in St Helens is discussed in more detailed in Section 11.

organisations. As noted above, Ofsted (2015) set out expectations for good governance that include the ability to hold school leadership to account, particularly ensuring a focus on disadvantaged pupils. However, Ofsted express doubts about whether there are sufficient people with the right qualities offering their services in areas of the highest need. In a 2015 survey by the National Governors' Association, half of all respondents said that they found it difficult to recruit governors to the governing board.

In 2014, Governors for Schools conducted research that showed that up to one in four school governor positions was vacant in some rural and deprived areas. In a study of school governance in three disadvantaged areas, two of which were in the North, Dean et al (2007) found that schools in such areas faced challenges in terms of recruiting members with the appropriate time, commitment and expertise. James et al (2011) argue that governance capital is the network of individuals and their capabilities, relationships and motivations that are available for the governing of a school. Governance capital is likely to be enhanced in schools with high attaining pupils and which are able to draw on local governors of high economic status and this, in turn, creates a mutually reinforcing 'amplifier effect.'

Section 6: Teacher training, recruitment and retention

6.1: Quality of teaching

Burgess (2016) draws on a wide range of research findings to conclude that teacher effectiveness is the most important factor in raising attainment in schools and makes a substantial difference for pupils of all ages.

Ofsted (2015) report that, while the quality of primary teaching is of a uniformly high level across the country, in secondary schools there is considerably more variation. In the North and Midlands, 69% of teaching in secondary schools is good or outstanding, compared with 80% in the South. As noted in the section on leadership, the problem is most marked at Key Stage 3 as headteachers prioritise GCSE preparation and so are more inclined to assign subject specialists to teach those classes. Worth et al (2015) suggest exploring measures for encouraging greater flexibility between phases with a focus on primary trainees and experienced primary teachers with subject expertise in shortage subjects. The authors argue that this could have the added benefit that teachers themselves making a transition between primary and secondary schools would be well-placed to support pupils making the same difficult transition. The Sutton Trust (2012) suggested that the transition from primary to secondary school is an issue for schools in areas of disadvantage in particular and could be improved by family liaison officers, and closer working between schools in both phases.

Hood (2016) considers that England faces a particular challenge in ensuring that opportunity is spread evenly across the country, noting that pupils from poorer backgrounds perform above the national average in many London boroughs while many large northern cities struggle to close the attainment gap. Countries with high-performing education systems, such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Canada, have uniformly high-quality classroom instruction. Consequently, Hood argues:

> "The key challenge for England is therefore to build the expertise and capacity of the teacher workforce – especially in more isolated and remote areas of the country" (page 8).

Allen et al (2016) found that pupils in disadvantaged schools across England are more likely to have teachers who are newly qualified or unqualified; inexperienced; without a relevant degree (which is particularly an issue in maths); and to experience a higher than average turnover of teachers. "All of these factors are associated with less effective teaching. The result is that poorer pupils they make less progress than their richer peers and the attainment gap persists" (page 3).

Teachers interviewed for a report by Sutton Trust (2012)[12] said that they do not receive adequate training to help them work effectively with pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. Hood (2016) suggests that many teachers do not receive the support and training they need to become experts in their profession because they are based in schools without strong networks of support. Recruiting new teachers is only one part of improving capacity, particularly in disadvantaged schools; the other is developing the expertise of those already in the system. This needs to take place within a school-led system but this can be problematic for those schools that are not part of a strong academy chain of sufficient size to provide development opportunities. A strong teaching school alliance can support school improvement but their coverage in many parts of the country is still patchy. The Sutton Trust (2012) refers to the Framework for Understanding Poverty, a US developed programme that seeks to break down social misunderstandings between middle class teachers and disadvantaged students. Three-quarters of teachers attending a conference in the UK related to the Framework said that they would amend their practice in response. The report suggests that the approach could be included in initial teacher training, teacher mentoring by the most effective teachers and through professional development for existing teachers.

As noted above, the higher levels of disadvantage in the North compared with elsewhere in the country suggest that these findings may be of particular significance for some schools in the region.

6.2: Capacity and recruitment

In a survey of primary and secondary headteachers in three regions, including the North West (the other regions were the East of England and the South East), Ofsted (2015) found challenging recruitment conditions in all areas. Difficulties were particularly acute in disadvantaged areas, with 50% of headteachers in affluent areas reporting difficulties in recruitment rising to 77% in more challenging ones. The National Audit Office (NAO) (2016) reported that the recorded rate of vacancies and temporarily filled positions in state-funded schools has doubled between 2011 and 2014, from 0.5% of the teaching workforce to 1.2%.

NAO (2015) reported that 54% of leaders in schools with large proportions of disadvantaged pupils said attracting and keeping good teachers was a major problem compared with 33% of leaders in other schools. DfE data (2015) reported that targets for teacher training places have been missed for the past four years, with problems particularly marked in subjects such as physics and mathematics. Only 71% of the target

---

[12] Findings based on in-depth interviews with 100 teachers and a survey of a further 87

number for postgraduate entrants to teacher training in physics was achieved in 2015 (Worth et al 2015). Headteachers in disadvantaged areas, including in the North, had particular difficulty recruiting teachers in mathematics and science with 61% reporting having to make temporary teaching arrangements for those subjects (Ofsted 2015). More secondary school classes are being taught by teachers without a relevant post-A-level qualification in their subject and this problem is worse for isolated schools and those in areas of socio-economic disadvantage, including many in the North. For example, the proportion of physics classes nationally taught by a non-specialist teacher rose from 21% to 28% between 2010 and 2014, exacerbated by leaving rates for existing mathematics and science teachers that are above average (NAO 2016). However, analysis by Education Datalab (2016) found no relationship between having physics specialists in a secondary school and GCSE outcomes in science or physics[13] (although the correlation between outcomes and teachers' qualifications may be different at A level).

There is considerable variation in the allocation of initial teacher training places across the country, ranging from four places per 100 pupils in the East Midlands to around seven places per hundred pupils in the North West through all routes (Allen et al 2016). However, this regional level data may mask differences at a more local level. Ofsted (2015) found that 74% of headteachers in affluent areas reported an insufficiency of training provision compared with 91% in areas with greater economic disadvantage. Almost three quarters of all secondary and around a third of all primary schools are part of a School Direct partnership (DfE initial teacher training allocations 2015 to 2016). Allen et al (2016) found that the allocation of School Direct training places does not correlate with regional vacancy rates. The North West has a relatively low vacancy rate, for example, but a high allocation of places. Nor does the allocation appear responsive to lack of alternative provision as School Direct has grown more in those places already well-served by teacher training provision, possibly because of existing collaborative arrangements. This suggests that access to newly qualified teachers (NQTs) may not be the primary reason for schools' engagement in training, although Hobson et al (2007) found that 32% of NQTs' first posts were in schools in which they had undertaken part of their training.

Ofsted (2015) notes that, if a school is not part of a training partnership, they miss out on this route to recruitment. Lower performing schools remain particularly disadvantaged in

---

[13] Using data from the School Workforce Census and based on a sample of 1128 secondary schools, Education Datalab looked at whether Key Stage Four teams with a high proportion of physics specialists have a higher average point score in science, controlling for entry attainment. They found no such relationship. Secondly, they used a physics contextual value-added score to assess performance, taking into account all observable prior attainment and pupil demographic characteristics. No overall relationship between school physics CVA and the number of physics specialists in the school was found, either on average or for any particular type of school.

the recruitment market for newly qualified teachers as they are less able to play a role in the teacher training system. Ofsted (2015) states that:

> "Too few initial teacher education (ITE) partnerships include enough schools with a judgement of requires improvement. It is the perception of some schools, whether this is the case or not, that they are not always welcomed into the teacher training partnerships that ITE providers create with schools on a voluntary basis" (page 77).

Another issue is the disparity in types of provision across the country; for example, there are more providers of salaried routes into teaching in London and the South East than in the North and elsewhere (NAO 2016), restricting the choice of those who would like to train near home in other parts of the country.

Worth et al (2015) recommend that further investigation should be made of regional variations in teacher recruitment:

> "House prices, the cost of living and the level of graduate pay outside of teaching may be creating recruitment challenges for schools in certain areas, affecting both new recruits and experienced teachers who may otherwise join the school from other parts of the country. In this case, there may be an argument for greater regional pay variation. In more deprived areas the challenges may be more about the attractiveness of the location or the school, rather than the job itself" (page 14).

While the difficulties reported were not confined to the North, as with the struggle to recruit high quality school leaders, a perpetual cycle of inability to recruit staff makes it harder for under-performing schools in the North to improve and so attract teachers and leaders. Geographically isolated areas and schools in areas of economic disadvantage are particularly vulnerable to falling into this vicious cycle. According to Ofsted (2015):

> "In each of the three regions surveyed, headteachers reported huge competition for good teachers. With fewer trainees coming through, trainees could take their pick of the schools they wanted to work at when they qualified. Unsurprisingly, the majority opted for a well-performing school in a sought-after area with good transport links" (page 17).

Ofsted (2015) recommend national action to tackle the issues, including:

1.   Developing local intelligence on teacher vacancies and recruitment problems in different parts of the country.

2.   Offering financial incentives for trainees to start their career in the areas and schools that need them most.

3.   Consideration of a form of 'golden handcuffs' to keep teachers working in the state system that trained them.

4.   A national strategy to ensure that teacher training flourishes in areas that currently lack it.

5.   Teacher training providers providing their trainees with experience of teaching in schools in challenging circumstances.

6.3: Retention

There are two aspects to retention that have the potential to impact on teaching capacity in the North: firstly, the extent to which teachers leave the profession altogether; and, secondly, the extent to which teachers move on from schools in the region. Data is not available to be able to quantify this, so the literature relies on a mixture of survey results, retention data by training route and analysis of teacher turnover and length of experience in disadvantaged schools.

Allen et al (2016) looked at retention rates for different routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). For secondary school teachers, the year one retention rate is highest for Teach First (80–87%) and lower for HEI-led post-graduate training (PG), School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) and School Direct salaried (around 60–66%). This is perhaps not surprising given the two-year commitment made by Teach First participants. As Allen et al (2016) note, more difficult to explain is that the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) has a higher retention rate than School Direct salaried:

> "(This) suggests that GTP may not be a reasonable proxy for the short-term retention of trainees from these routes. Although School Direct was a direct replacement of GTP, these figures suggest that something about the training route, trainees recruited or school environment has led to a lower early retention rate" (page 27).

In contrast, the five-year retention rate is broadly similar for GTP and SCITT (between 56% and 62%), slightly lower for HEI-led PG (51–54%) and lower still for Teach First (37–44%). However, Teach First trainees who remain in the profession are disproportionately more likely to be teaching in disadvantaged schools than those who have trained via other routes.

Regionally, the retention rate for staying in teaching is lowest for teachers trained in the North West, but the reasons for this are not clear (Allen et al 2016). The North West has a high allocation of training places and a relatively low vacancy rate so this may be a function of teachers unable to find work locally and being reluctant to move. However, Menzies et al (2015), in a survey of around 1,000 teachers, found that only just over half

(54%) listed being able to commute from their existing location as an important factor in job decisions, suggesting a reasonably high degree of mobility. Low retention rates could also be caused by other factors such as pupil or school characteristics or the alternative career options available (Allen et al 2016).

Analysing the results of a representative sample of teachers in England, Worth et al (2015) found that secondary teachers were significantly more likely to be considering leaving the profession than primary teachers. However, the proportion of teachers in disadvantaged schools, as measured by the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, that were considering leaving was no greater than that in more affluent schools.

Staff turnover (which does not necessarily equate to leaving the profession altogether) is considerably higher in schools with a higher than average intake of pupils eligible for free school meals (Allen et al 2016), suggesting that teachers are making the decision to move to less challenging schools. In areas of high deprivation and low skills, schools may quickly exhaust the local supply of skilled teachers and find it difficult to attract teachers from outside the area (Ofsted 2015). Allen et al (2016) found that teachers trained through school-led or school-centred routes are roughly as likely to move schools during their first three years of teaching as those trained through HEI routes, despite concerns that school-based routes might lead to reduced mobility. Those Teach First trainees who remain in teaching are most likely of all to change schools and most likely to be teaching in disadvantaged schools three years after qualifying compared with teachers trained through other routes, which may particularly benefit challenging schools.

Teachers frequently cite 'making a difference to pupils lives' and having 'the opportunity to make a difference to society' as important factors in their decision to enter the profession (Menzies et al 2015). Allen et al (2016) question, in the light of this, why then do schools with challenging intakes have such a high turnover of staff? Teachers in the most deprived secondary schools are 70% more likely to leave than teachers in a neighbouring more affluent school. Allen et al (2016) conclude that:

> "..more deprived schools tend to be less supportive of new teachers, with less high-quality mentoring, less supportive colleagues and tougher teaching assignments. This lack of support makes it harder for young, inexperienced teachers to master the basics of teaching and a wealth of research shows that new teachers tend to leave their schools if they feel they are not developing new skills and improving their teaching practice" (page 11).

Improving teacher recruitment, retention and expertise are necessary components of raising standards and tackling educational inequality; this is not a uniquely 'northern' issue, but it does affect many schools in the North who operate in disadvantaged contexts (Clifton et al 2016).

In order to combat the problem, in January 2016 the government announced that the new National Teaching Service (NTS) will be piloted in the North West. Its aim is to encourage talented teachers and middle leaders to work in schools that are struggling to attract and retain the professionals they need.

Section 7: School structures

7.1: Academies

The Academies Act 2010 enabled all primary, secondary and special schools to apply to become an academy. By the beginning of August 2016, there were 5,442 academies, and 383 free schools. Of the 3,400 state-funded mainstream secondary schools in England, 66% are now academies or free schools.

Analysis by the Education Policy Institute shows how beneficial it is for pupils to be in a high-performing academy trust or local authority, compared with a weaker school group (Andrews 2016). In secondary education, the top performing school groups have delivered improvements that are on average five GCSE grades higher for pupils across their subjects than the lowest-performing school groups. In the primary phase, the top performing school groups have delivered improvements equivalent to one term's more progress than the lowest performing.

The DfE (2016) in reporting on MAT performance measures found that, in terms of value added scores at Key Stage 2, 38 MATs (24.7%) performed significantly above the national average, 72 (46.8%) performed close to the national average, and 44 (28.6%) performed significantly below the national average. Analysis found no correlation between the current value added measure and contextual measures (that is, that higher or lower proportions of pupils of previous low performance, social disadvantage, with SEN or EAL do not appear to affect MAT performance one way or the other). At Key Stage 4, 15 MATs (23.8%) performed significantly above the national average, 14 (22.2%) close to the national average and 34 (54%) significantly below the national average. Again, analysis found no correlation between the current value added measure and contextual measures. Two academy groups operating in the North – Bright Futures Educational Trust and Tapton School Academy Trust – are in the significantly above average group for Key Stage 4, with Tapton also in the above average group for Key Stage 2.

There is considerable variation in performance between different MATs, and between local authorities, that is greater than the variation between the two groups (Andrews 2016). Academisation has driven greater improvement in some parts of the country and in some previously underperforming schools, but "structural reform can only do so much" (Ofsted 2015, page 13).

Hutchings et al (2016) found significant variation in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils both between and within academy chains. They did not find evidence that some academy chains[14] were especially successful in closing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, as those which had improved the attainment of poorer pupils tended to also have done so for more affluent ones too. Less successful chains tended to have equally poor results for both groups. Analysing results over the past three years, the authors noted that:

> "a handful of chains continue to achieve impressive outcomes for their disadvantaged students against a range of measures, demonstrating the transformational impact on life chances that can be made" (page 6).

In analysing the performance of academy chains in respect of disadvantaged pupils, Hutchings et al (2016) used five measures which were weighted to provide overarching scores:

- percentage achieving 5A*C at GCSE including English and maths – 50%;
- average capped GCSE point score - 20%;
- percentage making expected progress in English – 10%;
- percentage making expected progress in mathematics – 10%;
- percentage achieving EBacc – 10%.

The highest scoring chains based on their composite measure of attainment were ARK, City of London, David Meller, Diocese of London, Harris, Mercers and Outwood Grange. Of these, only Outwood Grange has schools in the north of England and understanding how this group achieved success may provide lessons for other schools and academy chains in the North.

High performance in academy groups and local authorities, therefore, appears to be partly correlated with geographic area. On average, both local authorities and chains perform more highly in London than they do nationally, particularly at Key Stage 2 (Andrews 2016). Ofsted (2015) found that 75% of good local authority maintained schools remained good or improved to outstanding at inspection compared with 74% of good academies.

---

[14] The Sutton Trust, in their reports, focus on academy chains, using the DfE definition of a chain as a group of three or more academies with a single sponsor. Some chains are not set up as MATs, but rather as collections of single academy trusts (SATs) or a combination of SATs and MATs.

7.2: Teaching schools

In recent years, the model of external school improvement services (from local authorities, universities and government initiatives such as the National Strategies teams) has given way to school-led improvement approaches, including peer-to-peer support, in part building on the success of the London Challenge, a school improvement programme which ran from 2003-2011.[15] The main vehicle for this new approach has been the establishment of teaching schools with responsibility for leading on areas such as initial teacher training, continuing professional development, brokering peer-to-peer support and disseminating good practice within their network of local schools.

There are concerns that the move towards a school-led system has not developed evenly across the country (Clifton et al 2016). The white paper Educational Excellence Everywhere identified a number of 'cold spots' across the country that have not benefited from the creation of these new sources of support. Of the 50 northern local authorities, 24 have more than 2,000 pupils per secondary-phase teaching school; in London, this is the case for just one of the 33 areas. Twenty-three northern local authorities have more than 1,000 pupils per primary-phase teaching school; in London, this is the case for only 11. In their review of education in the North, Clifton et al (2016) warn that:

> "This means that England is in danger of creating a system where high-performing areas are able to work together and improve, while those with fewer outstanding schools are left behind. In some places, this will be because other sources of support are available and there is no need to create new ones. But as the push towards a school-led system continues, the absence of teaching schools and other new forms of support in some areas will become an increasing concern" (page 36).

---

[15] The London Challenge is discussed in more detail in Section 11.

Section 8: Provision and admissions

In their investigation of social segregation in secondary schools in England, Smithers and Robinson (2010) compared the proportion of pupils at every state school in the country with parents on income benefits with the proportion of similarly deprived children in the localities from which the school intake is drawn. They found that there are big differences between schools in the average income background of pupils and that this largely reflects where the school is located. Schools in areas of high poverty, such as the poorer parts of Liverpool and Manchester, have higher proportions of pupils from lower income homes than schools in more prosperous areas like North Yorkshire. Smithers and Robinson (2010) also report that over and above these geographical differences, particular schools seem to get more of their pupils from relatively prosperous homes than neighbouring schools. According to Smithers and Robinson, these imbalances arise partly because fewer of the low income parents put their children forward, but also from selection on the part of the school when the places are over-subscribed. [16]

This is important because the composition of a school's intake can have an impact on the ability of schools to narrow attainment gaps. In the case of the North, as indicated in Section 4.2, Clifton et al's (2016) analysis of DfE's (2016b) School and College Performance Tables reveals that achievement among disadvantaged pupils in schools with large numbers of poorer pupils tends to be lower than in secondary schools with a lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils. Clifton et al (2016) suggest that:

> "(S)chools in the North with relatively few disadvantaged pupils are able to serve those pupils reasonably well. This might be because the school can easily target these pupils and give them more attention, or it might be because there is a 'peer effect', as a result of poorer pupils mixing with better-off classmates. On the other hand, many schools with large numbers of disadvantaged pupils appear to serve this group poorly. This could be because the school is overwhelmed, dealing with particular external circumstances (such as mass unemployment among parents), or has not put in place effective whole-of-school strategies to teach this group" (page 29-30).

Clifton et al (2016) argue that these issues need to be taken into account when interpreting Ofsted inspections of schools in the North and identifying strategies to close

---

[16] In relation to selection/admissions policies schools are applying, Smithers and Robinson (2010) note: "Considering all state comprehensives, the socially selective tended to be large, to have sixth forms, and to be faith or foundation schools deciding their own admissions. National Challenge schools, schools with high levels of special needs, and schools with high percentages from ethnic backgrounds other than White British are taking more children from income deprived homes than to be expected from where they are located".

attainment gaps in northern secondary schools between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

Section 9: Language and cultural barriers

There is a significant number of ethnic minority pupils in the northern powerhouse region, many of whom are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent and, as noted above, these groups are significantly underperforming in their GCSEs, compared with national averages. Several recent journal articles and reports examine the nature and causes of language and cultural barriers to ethnic minority pupil learning in northern schools (Crozier and Davies 2007; Gallagher and Beckett 2014; Handley 2011; Wardman 2012; Winterbottom and Leady 2014). These studies use qualitative research methods to analyse the perspectives of teachers, pupils and parents/guardians either in one particular school (Gallagher and Becket 2014; Winterbottom and Leady 2014) or in several schools situated in different parts of the north of England (Crozier and Davies 2007; Wardman 2012). In addition to identifying barriers to ethic minority pupils' learning, the studies suggest ways in which teachers and schools can overcome those barriers and build effective learning relationships with pupils and their parents and carers.

9.1: Barriers to ethnic minority pupil learning

Gallagher and Beckett (2014) examine barriers to ethnic minority pupil learning in an urban high school that is consistently targeted for closure in the north of England. The authors highlight the importance of tailoring the curriculum and classroom practices to the learning needs of different minority ethnic students, some of whom have to negotiate cultural and/or language barriers to schooling. They draw on evidence built up in the course of a teacher inquiry project, which focussed on achievement in the teacher's bottom set Year 7 English class. This involved the use of the "productive pedagogies framework" (Hayes et al. 2005) to analyse "minority ethnic pupils' academic and social learning needs, particularly 'working with and valuing difference' to accommodate the varied cultural knowledge and providing a 'supportive classroom environment' to secure student engagement" (page 854). This was said to stand in marked distinction to being compelled to 'teach to the test' in classes that are set.

Winterbottom and Leady (2014) draw similar conclusions in their study of pupils from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Kosovo in a primary school in Manchester. However, they also identify differences between the perspectives of teachers and ethnic minority pupils and their parents, which must be overcome in order to develop effective pedagogical knowledge and strategies. Their research found that despite the students' achievement perceived by the teacher, the children reported that they were bored and therefore learning was not occurring to the level both pupils and parents would like. Winterbottom and Leady (2014) conclude that in order to build better learning relationships, both parents and teachers need to make an effort to bridge these gaps. By understanding the parents' perspectives, through cultural scaffolding, teachers can better understand the

pupils and work with their parents. Moreover, the parents need to clarify their needs and concerns and help teachers understand their unique cultural beliefs and values (Winterbottom and Leady 2014).

In considering how schools can build effective relationships with ethnic minority parents, Winterbottom and Leady (2014) refer to the work of Naughton (2004) who suggests that to provide positive experiences for pupils and parents, in-depth orientations should be held for (im)migrant families in order to create positive relationships with families. Naughton (2004) also suggests that a series of parent-teacher meetings held throughout the school year to help families become more involved in their child's education and get ready for entry into the new school system (Winterbottom and Leady 2014).

Winterbottom and Leady (2014) note that bilingual teachers play an import role in bridging the gap between teachers and ethnic minority pupils and parents for whom English is an additional language (EAL) in the school in which they conducted their research. However, as they recognise, not all schools with pupils and parents with EAL currently have the luxury of bilingual teachers. Wardman's (2012) recent study for the British Council found that provision for children who speak English as a second language is geographically variable, due in part to a lack of centralisation of funding and resources. Wardman reports on a qualitative study conducted in the north of England in 2011, which sought to analyse current practice in UK primary schools alongside the existing UK and international research findings, focusing on the linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of being a bilingual learner. Significant variety in provision for bilingual learners was observed; mainly due to the location of the school, the postcode of which affects the funding received, and the number of bilingual learners in the schools. Wardman (2014) also notes the lack of an effective training programme for teachers, meaning they then may then 'wing it', rather than offer an innovative approach to the education of bilingual children. Wardman (2014) concludes that, as a result, language remains a barrier to effective learning for some ethnic minority students.

There is, then, a clear need for some schools to develop frameworks for increasing their capacity to deliver teaching in a range of languages, possibly using the wealth of native speakers who live in local communities but who are often unaware of how to gain formal training in how to teach their own language, as piloted in the North West Consortium of the Routes into Languages initiative (Handley 2011). However, Crozier and Davies's (2007) research on Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage families and primary school, secondary school and post-compulsory education in the north-east of England suggests that increasing capacity to speak in community languages in schools is not in itself sufficient to facilitate the development of effective relationships between schools and ethnic minority families who do not speak English as a first language. Crozier and Davies argue that it is also necessary to challenge the tendency of some teachers and schools to adopt a 'cultural interference model', which pathologises ethnic minority parents.

Crozier and Davies (2007) found that, some teachers, head teachers and other educational professionals referred to Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage parents as 'hard to reach'. However, whilst it was clear from the parents that they were not very, and in some cases not at all, involved in their children's schools and knew little about the education system or what their children were doing in school, it was also very apparent that the parents were not 'difficult', 'obstructive', or 'indifferent': the kind of behaviour 'hard to reach' implies. The article concludes that rather than parents being 'hard to reach', it is frequently the schools themselves that inhibit accessibility for certain parents.

9.2: Deficit views of non-standard English

Language and cultural issues do not only apply to ethnic minority pupils. As Snell (2013) notes, even though dialect prejudice in England has been recognised as a key issue in sociolinguistics since the 1960s, deficit views of non-standard English remain commonplace. Based on an empirical study of the language of working-class children in north-east England, Snell argues that educational responses to non-standard dialect in the classroom which problematise non-standard voices, risk marginalising working-class speech and may contribute to the alienation of working-class children, or significant groups of them, within the school system.

Section 10: Special Educational Needs

Several studies are centred on pupils with SEN in schools in the North. These studies focus on:

- a programme of science education with a group of Key Stage 3 pupils with moderate learning difficulties in a school in the north-east (Gebbels et al 2010);

- the perspective of SENCos and learning support assistants on special educational needs as they relate to physical education in mainstream secondary schools in the north-west (Maher 2013; Maher and Macbeth 2014);

- responses to bullying and use of social support among pupils with autism spectrum disorders in 12 Mainstream secondary schools in the north-west (Humphrey and Symes 2010a; 2010b);

- the views and experiences of pupils on the autistic spectrum in mainstream secondary schools in the north west (Humphrey and Lewis 2008);

- the deployment, training and teacher relationships of teaching assistants supporting pupils with autistic spectrum disorders in mainstream secondary schools in the north west (Symes and Humphrey 2011);

- the self-esteem of pupils in northern specialist schools for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. (Swinson 2008); and

- self harm by cutting in schools in a geographically circumscribed area of the north of England (Hall et al 2010).

While these studies focus on schools in the North, they are largely concerned with generic issues that apply across England. One article does, however, highlight how teaching and learning was tailored to specific contexts in the North. Gebbels et al (2010) discuss how they (two university academics and a practising school teacher) worked collaboratively on a programme of science education with a group of 16 Key Stage 3 pupils with moderate learning difficulties at a school in north-east England. The programme focused on local marine and coastal environments between Blyth and South Shields, and adjacent parts of the North Sea with a special emphasis on fieldwork, enquiry-based learning and cross-curricular approaches to learning. Gebbels et al (2010) report that pupils were more motivated to learn about science, had a sense of pride in their achievements and claimed that participation in the project helped them in forming friendships.

Section 11: Previous initiatives

Since 2000 two major initiatives have been undertaken to improve school performance and schools systems in urban conurbations across England: Education Action Zones and City Challenge. The literature includes journal articles and reports which examine the impact of these initiatives in areas of the North. These studies highlight the potential of area-level initiatives involving collaboration within and between schools to improve school performance

11.1: Education Action Zones

Education Action Zones (EAZs) were established across England following bids from groups of schools and were designed to tackle problems of underachievement and social exclusion in disadvantaged areas by devising innovative methods and strategies that would involve disaffected pupils more fully in education and improve their academic performance. EAZs varied in size, and partnership with the business world was seen as a way of bringing the best of successful commercial practice into education in order to create new learning opportunities for teachers and pupils and raise standards. EAZs were encouraged to identify and meet the needs of the wider community that they served by providing lifelong learning opportunities, improving access to information technology, and working with families. The intention was that zones should disseminate good practice (DfES 2006).

Gkolia et al (2006, 2009) evaluated one EAZ, based in St Helens in the North-West of England. The St Helens EAZ was established in April 2001 to enhance the development of schools within the St Helens Local Education Authority. The zone included three 11-16 secondary schools and twelve primary schools. A further one primary school and one special school had 'associated status' with the zone, which meant that they received no funding but accessed the curriculum programme offered within the network. The original remit and funding of the zone was for three years but this was extended for a further two years and the zone ceased to function on 31 March 2006 (Gkolia et al 2006, 2009).

The research team of the Centre for Educational Leadership at the University of Manchester were commissioned by the EAZ to carry out an evaluative study of one of its main initiatives, the 'Creative Learning/Collaborative Leadership' project'. The study adopted a blended methodology with two main dimensions including a questionnaire distributed to all schools in the zone and semi-structured interviews in a purposive sample of four schools with, head teachers, EAZ coordinators and lead learners. The study also drew on empirical data gathered by the EAZ, including external examination results for schools in the zone and Ofsted inspection findings.

The findings of the study suggest that the schools involved in the St Helens EAZ experienced a period of innovation and positive development through the 'Creative Learning/Collaborative Leadership' project. This involved: enhanced resources; enhanced practices in learning and teaching based on a deeper understanding of learning styles and pupil needs; and innovative and exciting school activities which created an environment that engaged pupils. There was a noticeable and significant improvement in pupil behaviour and motivation and evidence of improved attendance in some schools. Moreover, results at external examination improved within the EAZ faster than the national norm.

Gkolia et al (2006, 2009) also found that EAZ activities enhanced leadership capacity by giving teaching staff the opportunity to gain experience of leadership through the distribution of activities which were organised and managed by staff at all levels in the schools involved in the network. As noted in Section 5.4, this led to a sense of increased confidence amongst aspirant leaders and a greater sense of leadership capacity and willingness to delegate by senior leaders, especially headteachers, many of whom were already committed to notions of distributed leadership and collegial management approaches. Coaching and co-coaching were seen as an especially powerful mechanism in enhancing leadership understanding, general professional development and team working (Gkolia et al 2009).

According to Gkolia et al (2009), staff within schools reported that they felt a growing sense of empowerment and worth, exemplified by an enhanced ability to influence the strategic development of their school. Moreover, a culture of shared practice and expertise was said to be emerging within and between schools and the EAZ made a major contribution to the dissemination of best practice. This was predicated on a sense of mutual respect between professionals that crossed boundaries of hierarchies within schools and across phases of education. Stakeholders who participated in the evaluation were keen to extend the activities and ethos of the EAZ beyond the period of its formal functioning. For some, this aspiration related most significantly to changes in practice and professional development activity within their own school. For others, especially headteachers, this included but went beyond aspirations for their own institution and included the desire to capture and extend the sense of co-operation between and across schools (Gkolia et al 2006, 2009).

Gkolia et al (2009) contend that the key lessons learned from the initiative were as follows:

- The model of leadership in schools that can facilitate an initiative like the EAZs, because of its emphasis upon strategy and flexibility, is that of 'adaptive leadership' (Hadfield 2005), which is marked by:

- "capitalising on the opportunities which are provided by the local environment;

- developing a wide and overarching vision that goes beyond the current needs and interests of the organisation;

- a flexible and reflective stance to the paradoxes and complexities of their work that does not compromise the leaders' integrity;

- the skills to detect, acknowledge and consider the needs of different groups; and

- a leadership model which not only permits but also works with the leadership of others" (page 142-143).

- In order to produce a series of developments that were greater than the sum of the parts, it was necessary for the EAZ to interrelate its own activity with national and local strategies.

- As in the case of other successful EAZs, the EAZ's success was based in part on the fact that it "challenged boundaries – between business and the community, between welfare agencies, between education 'professionals' and 'lay people', between 'top down' and 'bottom up' policies, and between school time and nonschool time" (Powell et al: 469).

- Stakeholders' positive assessments of the EAZ were not only based on examinations results; they also valued the fact that the EAZ had, in their view, marked an era of innovation and positive change.

In assessing the strength of these findings two issues should be considered. The first is that, as Gkolia et al (2009) noted:

> "it is difficult to disaggregate the impact of EAZ activity and other national, local and school strategies on pupil achievement and the overall enhancement of school effectiveness and improvement. Several respondents pointed out that EAZ activities had run alongside in-school activities and the arrival of national strategies such as the Key Stage 3 strategy, or had come upon the heels of other national initiatives such as the Primary Strategy or the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies" (page 142).

Secondly, the EAZ initiative as a whole was subject to a sustained critique. Gkolia et al (2009) report that concerns were raised about:

- the tendency for governmental bodies and policymakers to forever reform education in response to public discontent with the performance of urban schools (Franklin 2005);

- high levels of variation in student academic attainment between and within zones, phases, and subjects' (Power et al. 2004);

- the involvement of the private sector in schools which was greeted by some with suspicion as critics believed it could lead to the commercialisation of education;

- the actual efficacy of partnerships with business given that business contributions never reached their expected levels, the participation of business in the action forum was often minimal, that the money that was contributed often came from the voluntary and public sectors, and that much of the contributions were in kind rather than in cash (Franklin 2005).

11.2: The City Challenge - Overview

The City Challenge was a three-year initiative launched in April 2008 by the Department for Children Schools and Families, which was designed to improve educational outcomes for young people and to tackle disadvantage and underachievement in the Black Country, Greater Manchester and London (Hutchins 2010). It built on the experiences of previous strategies and initiatives intended to improve schools such as Excellence in Cities: Education Action Zones: the introduction of leadership training for headteachers; National Strategies: and in particular the London Challenge.

Launched in May 2003, the London Challenge was a five-year strategy which aimed to improve results, raise aspirations and expectations, improve teacher morale, and increase parental confidence in London secondary schools (and some London primary schools from 2006). According to Tim Brighouse, the first Commissioner for London Schools who played a key role in shaping the London Challenge, the London Challenge differed from previous school improvement initiatives in that it adopted a flexible and experimental approach which piloted a wide range of new approaches and changed or abandoned those that did not work.

A key element of the London Challenge was the appointment of Challenge advisors employed directly by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The advisors worked with the weakest schools, which were labelled 'Keys to Success' schools. This label was chosen as to encourage these 'failing' schools to stay on board; the emphasis was deliberately on 'support and challenge' rather than schools being identified as failing. This was seen as essential both to inspire teachers already in post who had the potential to improve and to attract new staff to work in London (which suffered from teacher shortages at the time). Another important element of the London Challenge was a strong emphasis on the use of data. Comparative data was published in which schools were grouped into 'Families' with similar intakes so that it was possible for teachers to look at the schools that were in comparable circumstances, not necessarily close to them, and consider why are some schools doing better than they were. As well as intervening directly in schools, London Challenge worked to strengthen local authorities and tackled issues of teacher supply and retention by harnessing existing government initiatives and

programmes including Key Worker housing schemes and Teach First. Thus London Challenge saw its concern as everything that affected education in London.

Whilst building on the London Challenge and other school improvement initiatives, City Challenge was distinctive in a number of ways. It was underpinned by a belief that the educational problems facing urban areas should be addressed at area level, and that local authorities and schools need to work together to do this. Thus it aimed to improve educational provision and school performance across broad geographical areas, not simply in a specific group of participating schools. There was no single view of what schools needed to do to improve; all the interventions involved local solutions with key stakeholders (including headteachers and local authorities) centrally involved in the decisions. The various activities and interventions were characterised by a belief that school-to-school collaboration has a central role to play in school improvement; a recognition of the importance of school leadership; and a 'data-rich approach' to tackling issues and sharing learning (Hutchins 2010).

11.3: The City Challenge – Greater Manchester

The Greater Manchester Challenge involved over 1,100 schools in ten local authorities and had a government investment of around £50million. The overall aims of the Challenge were to raise the educational achievement of all children and young people in the city region and to narrow the gap in educational achievement between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers (Ainscow 2012, 2015; Ainscow et al 2013). Professor Mel Ainscow (2012), who was the Government's Chief Adviser for the Greater Manchester Challenge, describes the approach of the Greater Manchester Challenge as follows:

> "The overall approach of the Greater Manchester Challenge emerged from a detailed analysis of the local context, using both statistical data and local intelligence provided by stakeholders. This drew attention to areas of concern and also helped to pinpoint a range of human resources that could be mobilised in order to support improvement efforts. Recognising the potential of these resources, it was decided that networking and collaboration (within and between schools) should be the key strategies for strengthening the overall improvement capacity of the system. More specifically, this involved a series of inter-connected activities for "moving knowledge around" (page 296).

In an attempt to engage all schools in processes of networking and collaboration, 'Families of Schools' were set up, using a data system that grouped between 12 and 20 schools on the basis of the prior attainment of their students and their socio-economic home backgrounds. Ainscow (2012) argues that the strength of this approach is that it partners schools that serve similar populations whilst, at the same

time, encouraging partnerships amongst schools that are not in direct competition with one another because they do not serve the same neighbourhoods. An independent evaluation of the City Challenge initiative undertaken by Hutchings et al (2010) found that school staff felt that the main benefits of this approach were the opportunities to share good practice and learn from other schools, particularly those in different local authorities. Hutchings et al (2010) also found that a key factor in successful Family collaboration was leadership both at area level and within each Family. However, they also noted that while Families of Schools were usually led by a headteacher who had expressed interest, some reported that the role was very time-consuming, and some who were not leaders expressed concern that some of those leading Families pushed their own agendas at the expense of those of others. Ainscow et al (2013) believes that the Families of Schools proved to be successful in strengthening collaborative processes within the city region, "although the impact was varied".

According to Ainscow (2012), the impact of the Greater Manchester Challenge initiative was significant in respect to overall improvements in test and examination results:

> "Three years on, the impact was significant in respect to overall improvements in test and examination results, and, indeed, the way the education system carries out its business. So, for example, Greater Manchester primary schools now outperform national averages on the tests taken by all children in England. And, in the public examinations taken by all young people at 16, in 2011 secondary schools in Greater Manchester improved faster than schools nationally, with the schools serving the most disadvantaged communities making three times more improvement than schools across the country" (page 295).

Hutchings et al's (2010) independent evaluation found that the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals increased by more than the national figure in all areas (with the exception of Greater Manchester primary pupils). The attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals narrowed for London primary and secondary pupils, and Greater Manchester primary pupils. Hutchings et al (2016) note that the majority of schools involved in their evaluation, including those in Greater Manchester, reported that the strategies used to tackle attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers were successful in terms of raising awareness of attainment gaps and the systematic disadvantage that some pupils are facing.

Ainscow (2012) and Hutchings et al (2010) both report that, during the initiative, the number of schools in Greater Manchester below the Government's 'floor standard' decreased more than it did in other areas of the country. In addition, the proportion of 'good' and 'outstanding' schools, as determined by Ofsted's national inspection system increased, despite the introduction of a more challenging framework, which resulted in Outstanding grades becoming harder to achieve. With regard to increasing the number of Outstanding schools, Hutchings et al (2016) note that the interventions used in Greater

Manchester (and the Black Country) initially differed from those used in London. In London the focus was strongly on motivating and inspiring school leaders, and sharing outstanding practice, whereas in Greater Manchester (and the Black Country), the programmes were far more closely focused on the Ofsted framework and self-evaluation and did not provide structured ways of learning about wider practice in Outstanding schools. Some heads reported that these had been useful in preparing for inspection. However, in the final year of the programme, Greater Manchester developed new strategies, including schools working together and hub schools, which others could visit to find out about different aspects of Outstanding practice. Ainscow (2012) suggests that the creation of various types of hub schools proved to be an effective strategy to facilitate the movement of expertise. Hutchings et al (2010) do not offer any evidence in relation to this as none of the interviewees in their independent evaluation had experienced the hubs.

Ainscow (2012) argues that the Greater Manchester Challenge provides convincing evidence about the power of schools working, especially in relation to tackling disadvantage:

> "In terms of schools working in highly disadvantaged contexts, evidence from the Challenge suggests that school-to-school partnerships are the most powerful means of fostering improvements. Most notably, the *Keys to Success* programme led to striking improvements in the performance of some 160 schools facing the most challenging circumstances. There is also evidence that the progress that these schools made helped to trigger improvement across the system. (…) A common feature of almost all of these interventions, however, was that progress was achieved through carefully matched pairings of schools that cut across social 'boundaries' of various kinds, including those that separate schools in different local authorities. In this way, expertise that was previously trapped in particular contexts was made more widely available" (page 299).

Importantly, according to Ainscow (2013), the Greater Manchester Challenge demonstrated that such collaborative arrangements can have a positive impact on the learning of pupils in all of the participating schools, regardless of whether they are low performing schools or relatively strong schools. However, Ainscow (2013) also noted that, whilst increased collaboration of this sort is vital as a strategy for developing more effective ways of working, the experience of Greater Manchester showed that there is an essential additional ingredient, namely engagement with data:

> "We found that data was particularly essential when partnering schools, since collaboration is at its most powerful where partner schools are carefully matched and know what they are trying to achieve. Data also matters in order that schools go beyond cosy relationships that have no impact on outcomes. Consequently, schools need to base their relationships on evidence about each other's strengths and

weaknesses, so that they can challenge each other to improve. A team of expert advisers had a central role here, working alongside senior school staff in carrying out the analysis and, where necessary, mobilizing support from other school" (Written evidence submitted to the Education Select Committee of the House of Commons, October 2013).

Ainscow (2013) argues that the experiences and outcomes of the Greater Manchester Challenge have significant implications for national policy makers:

"In order to make use of the power of collaboration as a means of achieving both excellence and equity in our schools, they need to foster greater flexibility at the local level in order that practitioners have the space to analyse their particular circumstances and determine priorities accordingly. This means that policy makers must recognise that the details of policy implementation are not amenable to central regulation. Rather, these have to be dealt with by those who are close to and, therefore, in a better position to understand local contexts" (Written evidence submitted to the Education Select Committee of the House of Commons, October 2013).

Ainscow (2012) also highlights the problems of continuing tensions regarding priorities and preferred ways of working between national and local policy makers, which created barriers to progress during the Greater Manchester Challenge initiative:

"So, for example, those near to central government often remained pre-occupied with achieving short-term gains in test and examination scores in ways that can create barriers to efforts for promoting sustainable improvements. Coupled with this was a mistrust of local authorities—the staff of which were sometimes seen as part of the problem, rather than part of the solution—and doubts about the need to have separate strategies that fit particular contexts" (pages 306-307).

This chimes with Hutchings et al's (2016) conclusion that that while the City Challenge initiative achieved most of its objectives and demonstrated that tackling school improvement at area level has considerable benefits, it takes time to bring about sustainable improvement across an area, and the three years allocated to the initiative was perhaps too short.

Section 12: Conclusions and evidence gaps

12.1: Conclusions

There is a consensus in the literature that schools in the North, taken as a whole, perform comparatively poorly, especially with regard to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, and that school improvement in the region is a necessary part of realising the northern powerhouse ambitions. Data on school attainment in England indicate that overall the North performs relatively well on primary school attainment for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds but that many pupils are fare less well at secondary schools and this is where the policy focus should be. It should be remembered, however, that much remains to be done at primary school level and that there are important variations in both primary school and secondary school performance across the North.

Identifying and understanding effective provision is far from straightforward, however. There are large variations in the numbers of disadvantaged students in schools across the North. This is important because attainment data shows that disadvantaged pupils generally do better in schools with relatively few disadvantaged pupils than they do in schools with large numbers of disadvantaged pupils. Clifton et al (2016) identify a number of secondary schools in the North which, despite large numbers of disadvantaged pupils, are 'beacons of success'. These may well provide a source of effective strategies to tackle disadvantage and low attainment that could be shared across the North. Of course, it will be necessary to tackle variation within all schools in the North given that attainment gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils are also found in some schools rated as good and outstanding schools by Ofsted.

Ways of persuading effective headteachers to come to challenging schools in the North will need to be found, which may prove difficult as potential leaders are reluctant to relocate to schools in relatively isolated or economically deprived areas where there are few jobs for partners and longer travel times for those who commute (Earley et al 2012; The Future Leaders Trust 2015). Unfavourable Ofsted judgments also make it harder for schools to attract school leaders and teachers even in schools in the cities (Clifton et al 2016). Identifying and developing middle leaders already in schools may not only help to meet current and future leadership needs, but also help retain teachers within those schools where turnover is currently high.

As Allen et al (2016) note, pupils in disadvantaged schools are more likely to have teachers who are newly qualified or unqualified; inexperienced; without a relevant degree; and to experience a higher than average turnover of teachers; all of which lead to less effective teaching. Having access to high-quality staff is a key driver of school improvement, resulting in a cycle of under-performance for those unable to attract the

right people. Ways of attracting, developing and retaining staff need to be considered in order to realise the ambitions of the Northern Powerhouse Strategy.

While teaching school alliances as an engine for school-led improvement is still developing and MATs are in their relative infancy, emerging evidence shows regional inequalities in the performance of both types of groupings. Coverage by teaching schools is patchy with some areas in the North poorly served and therefore less able to benefit from support than schools in other regions which may already be relatively high performing. Similarly, Hutchings et al's (2016) analysis demonstrated that the majority of high performing MATs operate in the South and the West Midlands where schools are already strong, and where schools still under local authority control also tend to perform well. Part of the success of these MATs, and that of teaching school alliances in the same geographical areas, may be due to the already large number of high-performing schools in the groups being able to offer support to enable the relatively few under-performing ones to improve. This suggests that current high-performing MATs would not necessarily achieve the same levels of success were they to expand their coverage to include the North although one MAT (Outwood Grange) has been successful in the North despite a high proportion of disadvantaged pupils. Thought needs to be given to how groupings that include a comparatively high number of poorly performing schools may be supported to improve or there is a risk that current structures may lead to continuing improvement only in already strong areas and an ever-widening gap.

Alongside these issues careful consideration should be given to the composition of schools' intakes, which can influence the ability of schools to tackle attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. This will need to focus on both admissions procedures and parental choice. At a national level it is being suggested that academies and primary free schools tend to have a lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils than their communities.[17] How will this play out as more schools in the North become academies? How can admissions procedures be adapted to ensure that schools are more representative of the distribution of disadvantaged and more affluent children in the localities they serve? With regard to parental choice, it will be necessary to better understand why parents of some disadvantaged pupils tend to place their children in the nearest school without reflecting on where their children might perform best.

It is also important to keep in mind that there are language and cultural barriers to pupil learning in some northern schools, which must be overcome in order to develop effective pedagogical knowledge and strategies. In the case of ethnic minority pupils bilingual teachers can play an import role in bridging the gap between teachers and children and parents. There is therefore a need for schools to ensure they have the capacity to deliver

---

[17] The Guardian Article: School reforms widen poverty gap

teaching in a range of languages, possibly using utilising native speakers who live in local communities, as in the North West Consortium of the Routes into Languages initiative. It should also be remembered that language and cultural issues do not only apply to ethnic minority pupils. As Snell (2013) shows, even though dialect prejudices have been recognised as a key issue since the 1960s, deficit views of non-standard English remain commonplace in education in England, including the North.

Previous initiatives to improve school performance and schools systems in urban conurbations in the North demonstrate the potential of area-level initiatives involving collaboration within and between schools, carefully matched through analysis of school performance data. They also show that School to School partnerships do not only benefit low performing schools: they are of mutual benefit, with high performing schools learning, for example, through reflection on their own practice. According to Ainscow (2012), this is important in terms of encouraging high performing schools to become involved in initiatives that initially might appear to be of little advantage to them. Of course, the problem of the reluctance of more isolated schools in the North to either link up with more successful neighbouring schools or become part of effective multi-academy trusts (MATs) will also need to be overcome (Ofsted 2015).

The literature on previous school improvement initiatives also indicates that it is critical that national policy makers allow substantial flexibility at the local level in order that educational practitioners are able to analyse their particular circumstances and determine priorities accordingly. Correspondingly, the models of leadership in schools that can facilitate school improvement initiatives are those which emphasise an over-arching vision, strategy and flexibility

The Government intends to invest £20 million a year of new funding in the Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy. The funding is substantial but the annual amount for the North as a whole is not much more than the annual amount for the Greater Manchester Challenge which had an overall budget of £50 million over three years. This makes it imperative that funding is used where it will provide the greatest returns.

12.2: Evidence gaps

The literature, particularly Ofsted (2015), suggests that it is in secondary schools where education in the north of England is weak in comparison with the rest of the country and, linked to this, where the quality of teaching and leadership is most likely to be weak. In contrast, the performance of primary schools in the North is similar to that across the country. More research is needed to understand the reasons for this disparity.

There is limited evidence on why disadvantaged pupils perform better in schools with relatively low numbers of disadvantaged pupils than they do in schools with large

numbers of disadvantaged pupils. Further research on this issue could begin with a detailed examination of the secondary schools with large numbers of disadvantaged pupils which are identified as "Beacons of Success" by Clifton et al (2016) and Outwood Grange, a high-performing MAT in the North with high levels of disadvantaged pupils.

The literature suggests that the best way to assist disadvantaged students is to recognise that the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is the result of other gaps that exist in education, such as gaps of employment opportunity, wealth and income, nutrition and healthcare and that attention. However, there is limited evidence on how these gaps impact on attainment and how they can be addressed/closed in order to tackle underachievement by disadvantaged pupils.

Several authors caution against using raw attainment as the only measure by which to judge the quality of schools and argue that a more positive picture of school performance in the North is provided when measures of 'contextual value-added' are applied. However, the construction and usefulness of contextual measures (to take into account disadvantage, ethnicity, etc) has attracted limited attention in the literature.

The literature highlights concerns amongst teachers about the Ofsted inspection regime and apparent neglect of the circumstances of disadvantaged pupils. This also appears to impact on the willingness of school leaders and teachers to work in schools with an unfavourable Ofsted judgement. Further research is needed on teachers' perceptions of the issues surrounding attainment in the North and how these should be addressed, as the success of future initiatives is likely to depend on assuaging their concerns.

While there is data on teacher vacancies at a regional level, the literature suggests that this might mask considerable variation at a local level. More research is needed to understand where such relative recruitment difficulties exist and the reasons for them. There are also questions to be answered about the quality of teachers appointed to schools with high levels of disadvantaged pupils given the evidence in the literature that they are less likely to have a relevant degree and to be experienced teachers than in other schools.

Clifton et al (2016) argue that policymakers should focus on tackling variation within all schools in the North and that this should involve a greater focus on improving how schools deploy their resources to ensure that disadvantaged pupils benefit from good teachers and pupil premium funding. However, there is surprisingly little detailed research into teaching and learning in respect of different types of pupil (e.g. what does high quality teaching for disadvantaged pupils entail in different circumstances?) and the effective use of pupil premium.

Ofsted (2015) report that, while the quality of primary teaching is of a uniformly high level across the country, in secondary schools there is considerably more variation. Further research is required to help understand why this is the case, especially in the North.

Although the data shows a higher than average staff turnover in schools with high levels of disadvantaged pupils, it is not clear why this is so or whether such teachers are moving to less challenging schools or being lost to the profession altogether. More research is needed to understand why the turnover is so high, where teachers go on leaving and what might induce them to stay.

Some reports suggest a link between the ability to recruit newly qualified teachers and schools' participation in teacher training. New research is needed to explore the impact of involvement in training and recruitment and to understand the barriers to participation, particularly in schools with high levels of disadvantaged pupils.

Ofsted (2015) reports that isolated schools in the North are reluctant to either link up with more successful neighbouring schools or become part of effective multi-academy trusts (MATs). Further research is needed to establish why this is the case and to identify how this can be overcome.

There is limited evidence of school admissions in the North. There is a need for research on how admissions processes are organised and how parental choices are made across the North, with a particular focus on the impact of academisation and MATs.

Appendix 1: Search terms

The following search terms were used combined, where appropriate, (e.g. with "OR" or "AND") with schools in relevant geographical regions (North/Northern/North West/North East England) and with schools in core Northern powerhouse cities (Liverpool/Leeds/Manchester/Sheffield /Newcastle):

- Education Attainment
- Attainment
- Attainment gaps
- School effectiveness
- School performance
- School intakes
- School admissions
- Social disadvantage
- Deprivation
- Participation
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- SEN /Special educational needs
- Teacher recruitment
- Teacher training
- Teacher retention
- System leadership
- Middle leadership
- School leadership
- Academies
- Academisation
- Schools England inner cities

Appendix 2: List of bibliographic databases and journals searched

Online bibliographic databases:

- ERIC
- ISI Web of knowledge
- Education Research Abstracts Online
- British Education Index
- BERA Abstracts
- JSTOR
- Google Scholar
- The Directory of Open Access Journals
- ProQuest
- Social Science Research Network
- OpenGrey

Journals (accessed via publisher websites and library databases for relevant articles), including:

- British Educational Research Journal
- British Educational Research Journal
- British Journal of Special Education
- Oxford Review of Education
- Journal of Teacher Education
- International Journal of Educational Research
- Review of Educational Research
- Educational Research Review
- Cambridge Journal of Education
- British Journal of Educational Studies
- Gender and Education
- Urban Education

Bibliography

Ainscow, M (2012). Moving knowledge around: strategies for fostering equity within educational systems. *Journal of Educational Change*. 13(3), 289–310

Ainscow, M. (2013). Written evidence submitted by Professor Mel Ainscow, Centre for Equity in Education, University of Manchester to The Education Select Committee of the House of Commons.
[Written evidence submitted by Professor Mel Ainscow to the Education Select Committee of the House of Commons](#)

Ainscow, M., Farnsworth, V. and Solomon, Y. (2013). Developing more equitable education systems: reflections on a three-year improvement initiative. In *Reframing Educational Research: Resisting the 'what works' agenda.* (pp. 77-89). London: Routledge.

Ainscow, M. (2015) *Towards self-improving school systems: lessons from a city challenge*. London: Routledge

Allen R, Belfield C, Greaves E, Sharp C, Walker M. 2016. *The Longer-Term Costs and Benefits of Different Initial Teacher Training Routes.* Institute for Fiscal Studies.
[The Longer-Term costs and Benefits of Different Initial Teacher Training Routes](#)

Allen R, Burgess S and Mayo J. 2012. *The teacher labour market, teacher turnover and disadvantaged schools: new evidence for England.* Working Paper No. 12/294. CMPO

Allen R, Mian E, and Sims S. 2016. *Social inequalities in access to teachers.* Social Market Foundation Commission on Inequality in Education: Briefing 2
[Social inequalities in access to teachers.](#)

Andrews J. 2016. *School performance in multi-academy trusts and local authorities*. Education Policy Institute.
[School performance in multi-academy trusts and local authorities](#)

Burgess S**.** 2016 *Human Capital and Education: The State of the Art in the Economics of Education**.* IZA Discussion Paper No. 9885 [Human Capital and Education: The State of Art in the Economics of Education](#)

Clifton J and Cook W (2012) *A long division: Closing the attainment gap in England's secondary schools*, IPPR. [A long division: Closing the attainment gap in England's secondary schools](#)

Byrne, B. and De Tona, C. (2012). "Trying to Find the Extra Choices": Migrant Parents and Secondary School Choice in Greater Manchester. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 33(1): 21-39.

Clifton J, Round A and Raikes L (2016). *Northern schools: Putting education at the heart of the northern powerhouse*, IPPR North. [Northern Schools: Putting education at the heart of the northern powerhouse](#)

Comptroller and Auditor General, *Funding for disadvantaged pupils, Session 2015-16, HC 90*, National Audit Office, June 2015

Cox E and Raikes L (2015) *The state of the North 2015: Four tests for the northern powerhouse*, IPPR North. [The state of the North 2015: Four tests for the northern powerhouse](#)

Crozier, G. and Davies, J. (2007). Hard to Reach Parents or Hard to Reach Schools? A Discussion of Home-School Relations, with Particular Reference to Bangladeshi and Pakistani Parents. *British Educational Research Journal* 33(3): 295-313.

Day C, Sammons P, Hopkins D, Harris A, Leithwood K, Gu Q, Brown E, Ahtaridou E and Kington A. 2009. *The Impact of School Leadership on Pupil Outcomes*. University of Nottingham

Dean C, Dyson A, Gallannaugh F, Howes A and Raffo C*. 2007. Schools, governors and disadvantage.* Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Department for Education, September 2014. Initial teacher training allocations for academic year 2015 to 2016, [Initial teacher training allocations for academic year 2015 to 2016.](#)

Department for Education, October 2015. Provisional data on key stage 4 (KS4) and key stage 5 (KS5) students in further education, employment and training destinations. [Provisional data on key stage 4 (KS4) and key stage 5 (KS5) students in further education, employment and training destinations](#)

Department for Education [DfE] (2016a) 'Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2014 to 2015', data. [Revised GCSE and equivalent results in England: 2015 to 2015](#)

Department for Education [DfE] (2016b) 'School and college performance tables', data. [School and college performance tables](#)

Department for Education [DfE]. NEET statistics quarterly brief: January to March 2016. [NEET statistics quarterly brief: January to March 2016](#)

Developing statistics on the performance of state-funded schools in multi-academy trusts in England. July 2016. Developing statistics on the performance of state-funded schools in multi-academy trusts in England

Earley, P, Higham, R, Allen, R, Allen, T, Howson, J, Nelson, R, Rawar, S, Lynch, S, Morton, L, Mehta, P and Sims, D. (2012). *Review of the school leadership landscape.* Nottingham; National College for School Leadership. Review of the school leadership landscape

Education Datalab. 2015. *Seven things you might not know about our schools.* Seven things you might not know about our schools

Franklin, B.M. 2005. *Gone before you know it: Urban school reform and the short life of the Education Action Zone initiative*. London Review of Education 3, no. 1: 3–27.

Future Leaders Trust. 2015. *Combatting Isolation. Why coastal schools are failing and how headteachers are turning them around.*

Future Leaders Trust 2016. *Heads Up: Meeting the Challenges of Headteacher Recruitment.* Heads Up: Meeting the Challenges of Headteacher Recruitment

Gallagher, K. and Beckett, L. (2014). Addressing Barriers to Minority Ethnic Students' Learning in a Performative Culture: Possible or Aan U Suuragelin? Niemozliwe? Nemoguce? *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education* 46(5): 846-859.

Gebbels, S., Evans, SM. and Murphy, LA. (2010). Making Science Special for Pupils with Learning Difficulties British *Journal of Special* Education 37(3): 139-147.

Gkolia, C., Switzer, J. and Brundrett, M. (2006). St Helens EAZ: Creative Learning/Collaborative Leadership Project. *Management in Education* 20(4): 25-29.

Gkolia, C., Brundrett, M. and Switzer, J. (2009). An Education Action Zone at Work: Primary Teacher Perceptions of the Efficacy of a Creative Learning and Collaborative Leadership Project. *Education 3*-13 37(2): 131-144.

Hall, B., Elliott, J., Place, M. (2010). Self-Harm through Cutting: Evidence from a Sample of Schools in the North of England. *Pastoral Care in Education* 28(1): 33-43.

Handley, S. (2011). Promoting Community Language Learning in the United Kingdom. *Language Learning* Journal 39(2): 149-162.

Hobson A.J., Malderez A., Tracey L., Homer M., Mitchell N., Biddulph M., iannakaki, M.S. Rose A., Pell R.G., Roper T., Chambers G.N. & Tomlinson P.D. (2007) Newly Qualified Teachers' Experiences of their First Year of Teaching: *Findings from Phase III of the Becoming a Teacher Project*

Hood M (2016) *Beyond the plateau: The case for an Institute for Advanced Teaching*, IPPR. [Beyond the Plateau: The case for an Institute for Advanced Teaching](#)

Humphrey, N. and Symes, W. (2010a). Responses to Bullying and Use of Social Support among Pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) in Mainstream Schools: A Qualitative Study *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs* 10(2): 82-90.

Humphrey, N. and Symes, W. (2010b). Perceptions of Social Support and Experience of Bullying among Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders in Mainstream Secondary Schools *European Journal of Special Needs* Education 25(1): 77-91.

Humphrey, N. and Lewis, S. (2008). "Make Me Normal": The Views and Experiences of Pupils on the Autistic Spectrum in Mainstream Secondary Schools. *Autism: The International Journal of Research and Practice* 12(1): 23-46.

Hutchings M, Greenwood C, Hollingworth S, Mansaray A and Rose A (2010) *Evaluation of the City Challenge Programme*, Department for Education. [Evaluation of the City Challenge Programme](#)

Hutchings, M, Hollingworth, S, Mansaray, A, Rose, R and Greenwood, C (2012). *Research report DFE-RR215: Evaluation of the City Challenge programme.* London: Department for Education. [Evaluation of the City Challenge programme: research report DFE-RR215](#)

Hutchings M, Kirby P, Francis B. 2016. *Chain Effects*. Sutton Trust [Chain Effects](#)

James, C., Brammer, S., Connolly, M., Fertig, M., James, J. and Jones, J., 2011. School governing bodies in England under pressure: the effects of socio-economic context and school performance. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 39 (4), pp. 414-433.

Lamont, E., Bramley, G. (2011). *Evaluation of City Challenge Leadership Strategies: Greater Manchester Area Report*. Slough: NFER.

Lupton R (2004) *Schools in Disadvantaged Areas: Recognising Context and Raising Quality*, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, LSE. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/6321/

Macleod, S., Sharp, C., Bernardinelli, D., Skipp, A. and Higgins, S. (November 2015). *Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils: articulating success and good practice*. London: Department for Education. [Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils: articulating success and good practice](#)

Maher, A. (2013). Statements of Special Educational Needs and Mainstream Secondary Physical Education in North-West England. *British Journal of Special Education* 40(3): 130-136.

Maher, A. and Macbeth, J. (2014). Physical Education, Resources and Training: The Perspective of Special Educational Needs Coordinators Working in Secondary Schools in North-West England. *European Physical Education Review 20(1)*: 90-103.

Menzies, L., Parameshwaran, M., Trethewey, A., Shaw, B., Baars, S. and Chiong, C. (2015), 'Why Teach?', LKMco and Person report Why Teach

National Audit Office. 2016. *Training New Teachers* Training New Teachers

National Governors' Association. 2015. 'NGA comments on the findings from the biggest governance survey of the year'. NGA comments on the findings from the giggest governance survey of the year

Naughton, S. (2004). *English language learners, immigrant children and preschool for all: The importance of family engagement*. Children Now. Oakland: CA.

OECD (2014). *PISA 2012 Results in Focus: What 15-year-olds Know and What They Can Do With What They Know.* Paris: OECD [online]. Available: What 15 year olds know and what they can do with what they know

Ofsted (2015) *The annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2014/15*. The annual report of her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's services and Skills

Perera N and Treadaway M (2016) *Education in England: Annual Report 2016*, CentreForum. http://centreforum.org/publications/education-in-england-annual-report-2016/

Power, S., G. Whitty, S. Gewirtz, D. Halpin, and M. Dickson. 2004. Paving A third way? A policy trajectory analysis of Education Action Zones. Research Papers in Education 19, no. 4: 453–75.

Robson, B., Deas, I., & Lymperopoulou, K. (2009). *Schools and pupil performance in Greater Manchester: A key driver of social polarization.* University of Manchester report

Rudd, P., Poet, H., Featherstone, G., Lamont, E., Durbin, B., Bergeron, C., Bramley, G., Kettlewell, K., Hart, R. (2011). *Evaluation of City Challenge Leadership Strategies: Overview Report*. Slough: NFER. City challenge leadershio strategy overview evaluation report

Smithers, A. and Robinson, P. (2010) *Worlds Apart: Social Variation Among Schools. Sutton Trust* Worlds apart: social variation among schools

Snell, J. (2013). Dialect, Interaction and Class Positioning at School: From Deficit to Difference to Repertoire. *Language and Education 27(2):* 110-128.

Sutton Trust 2011.*Degrees of Success: University Chances by Individual School.*
[Degrees of Success: University chances by individual school](#)

Sutton Trust 2012. *Premium Policies: What schools and teachers believe will improve standards for poorer pupils and those in low-attaining schools*

Sutton Trust 2015. *Research Brief: Missing Talent* [Research Brief: missing talent](#)

Swinson, Jeremy. (2008). The Self-Esteem of Pupils in Schools for Pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties: Myth and Reality. *British Journal of Special Education*, 35(3): 165-172.

Symes, W., Humphrey, N. (2011). The Deployment, Training and Teacher Relationships of Teaching Assistants Supporting Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in Mainstream Secondary Schools *British Journal of Special* Education 38(2): 57-64.

Winterbottom, C. and Leedy, A.K. (2014). Minority Voices: A Case Study of Children and Parents in a Manchester Primary School. Early Childhood Education Journal 42:317–325.

Worth, J., Bamford, S. and Durbin, B. (2015). *Should I Stay or Should I Go? NFER Analysis of Teachers Joining and Leaving the Profession.* Slough: NFER. [Should I stay or should I go: Analysis of teachers joining and leaving the profession](#)

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at: contact Department for Education

This document is available for download at www.gov.uk/government/publications