

# What Does Data and Research Tell Us About Closing the Achievement Gap for Disadvantaged pupils?

Feyisa Demie

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# Outline

- **This session aims to look into what the data and research tells us about closing the achievement gap and addressing educational inequality**
- **To tackle the challenge of the attainment gap requires us first to understand both the scale and nature of the gap, as well as the factors most likely to help close it including:**
  - 1. The national context: Disadvantaged pupils demographic distribution in England**
  - 2. Why does the achievement gap matter?**
  - 3. What does the data tell us about the achievement gap for disadvantaged pupils?**
  - 4. What does research tell us about the most effective strategies in raising achievement?**
    - **EEF Research Evidence**
    - **DfE Headteacher Survey**
    - **Lambeth Headteacher Survey**
    - **Lambeth Case Studies Schools Evidence**
  - 5. Concluding remarks**
  - 6. Implications for policy and practice**

# The Source of Evidence and Terminology

## 1. The data:

The source of evidence to support this presentation is varied and includes:

- DfE trend national KS2 and GCSE NPD data
- Case study schools' research evidence into what works in schools
- Local and DfE national survey of the most effective strategies to raise achievement

## 2. Measures of pupil performance

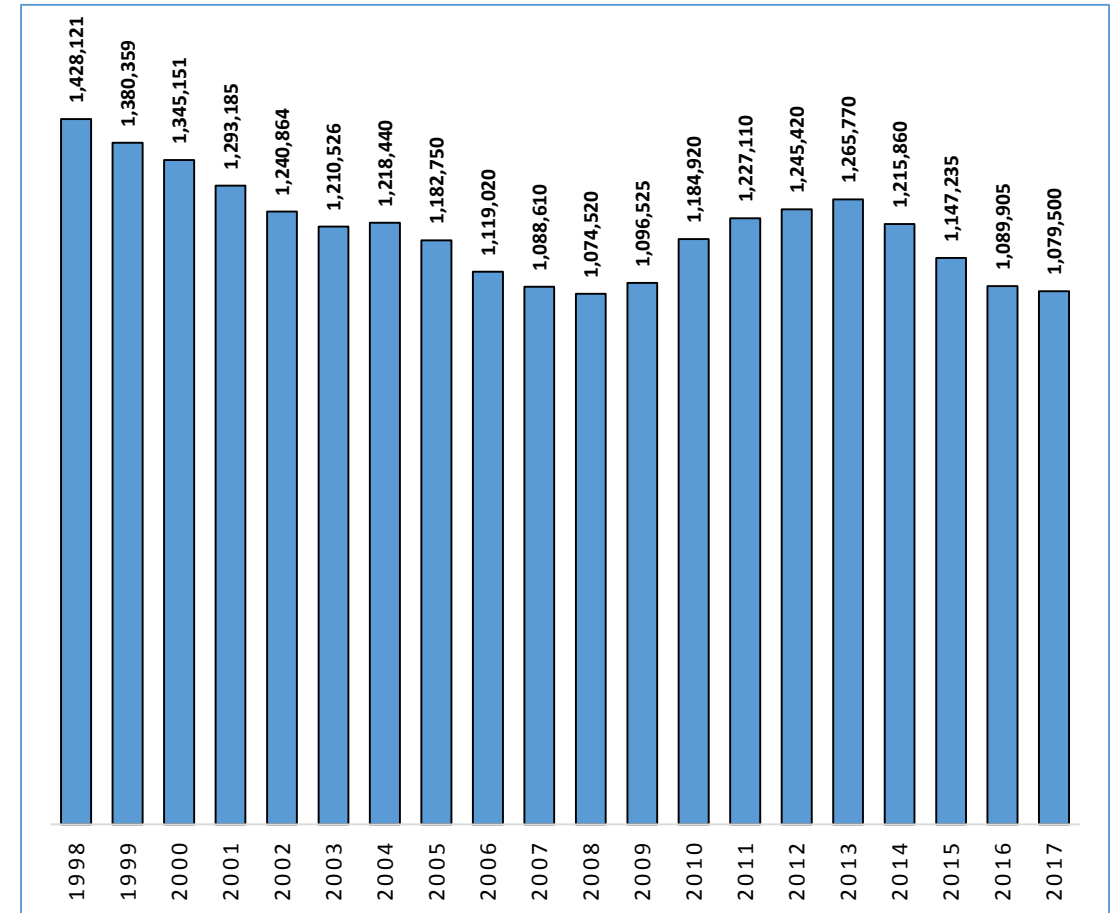
- The Reading, Writing and Maths combined indicator is used to compare the performance gap at the end primary education
- The 5+A\*-C including English and maths indicator is used to compare the performance gap at the end of secondary education

## 3. Terminology: Why Free School Meals?

- For the purpose of this research the term 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils from low income backgrounds who are eligible for free school meals.
- The merit of free school meals is that it provides a clear and comprehensive means of differentiating between two broad groups of FSM pupils and non FSM pupils

# What does FSM data tell us about the number of disadvantaged pupils in England Schools 1998-2017?

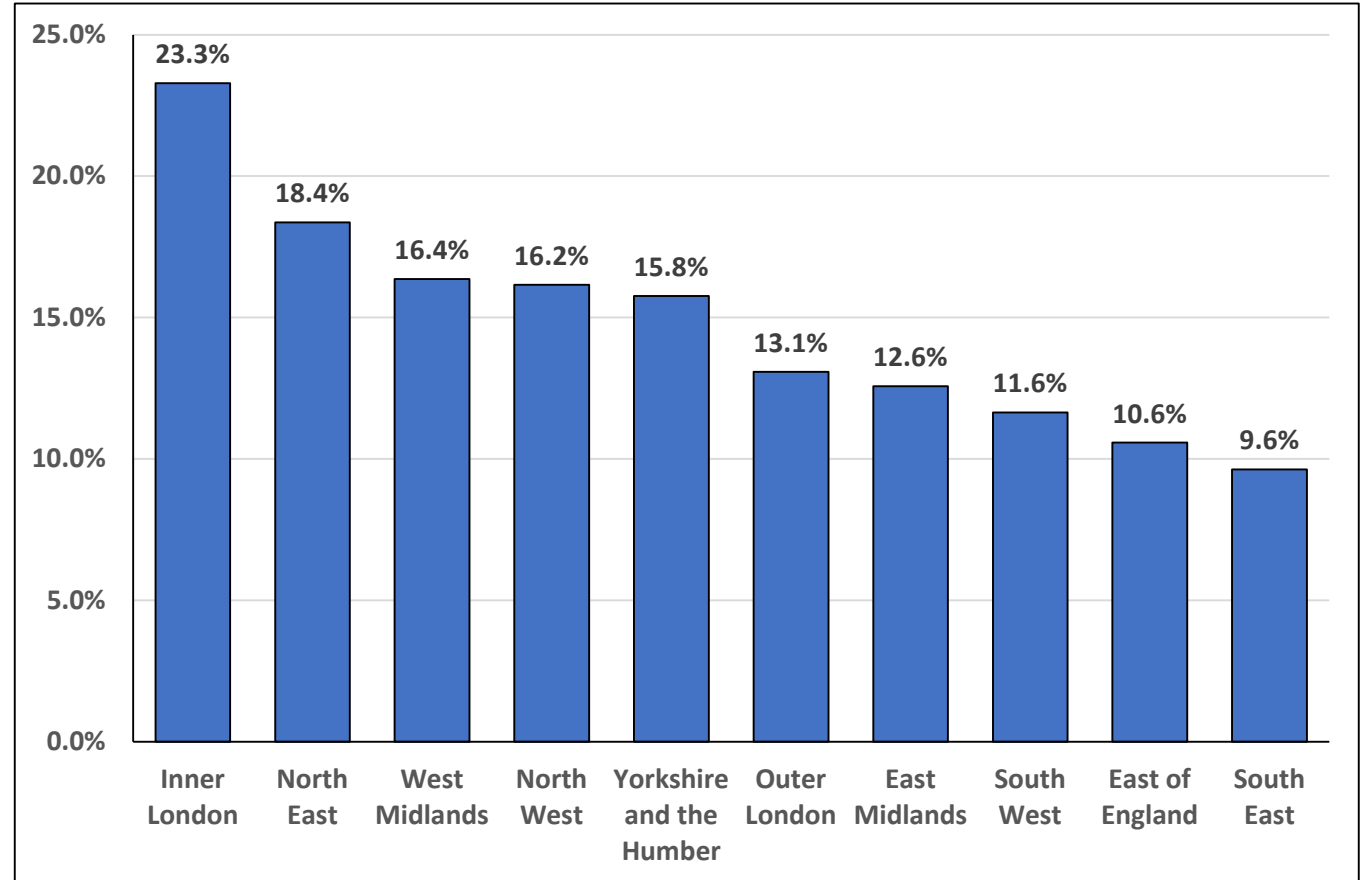
- The census data also shows that the number of disadvantaged pupils in England is very high and has fluctuated over the years. This issue is increasingly important given the number of disadvantaged pupils in England over the last decade.
- The census data shows that 14% of pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for free school meals (FSM)
- In 1998 there were 1,428,121 pupils and this has gone down to 1,079,500 in 2017.
- However, the NAO suggest that recent measures exclude some disadvantaged children. For example, if a parent doesn't register their child for free school meals then they won't show up in the figures.
- The Department's estimate was that about 160,000 eligible pupils had not registered in 2013 (NAO 2015).



[Source: DfE \(2017\). Schools, pupils and their characteristics January National tables SFR28/2017](#)

# Percentage of disadvantaged pupils by regions in England 2017

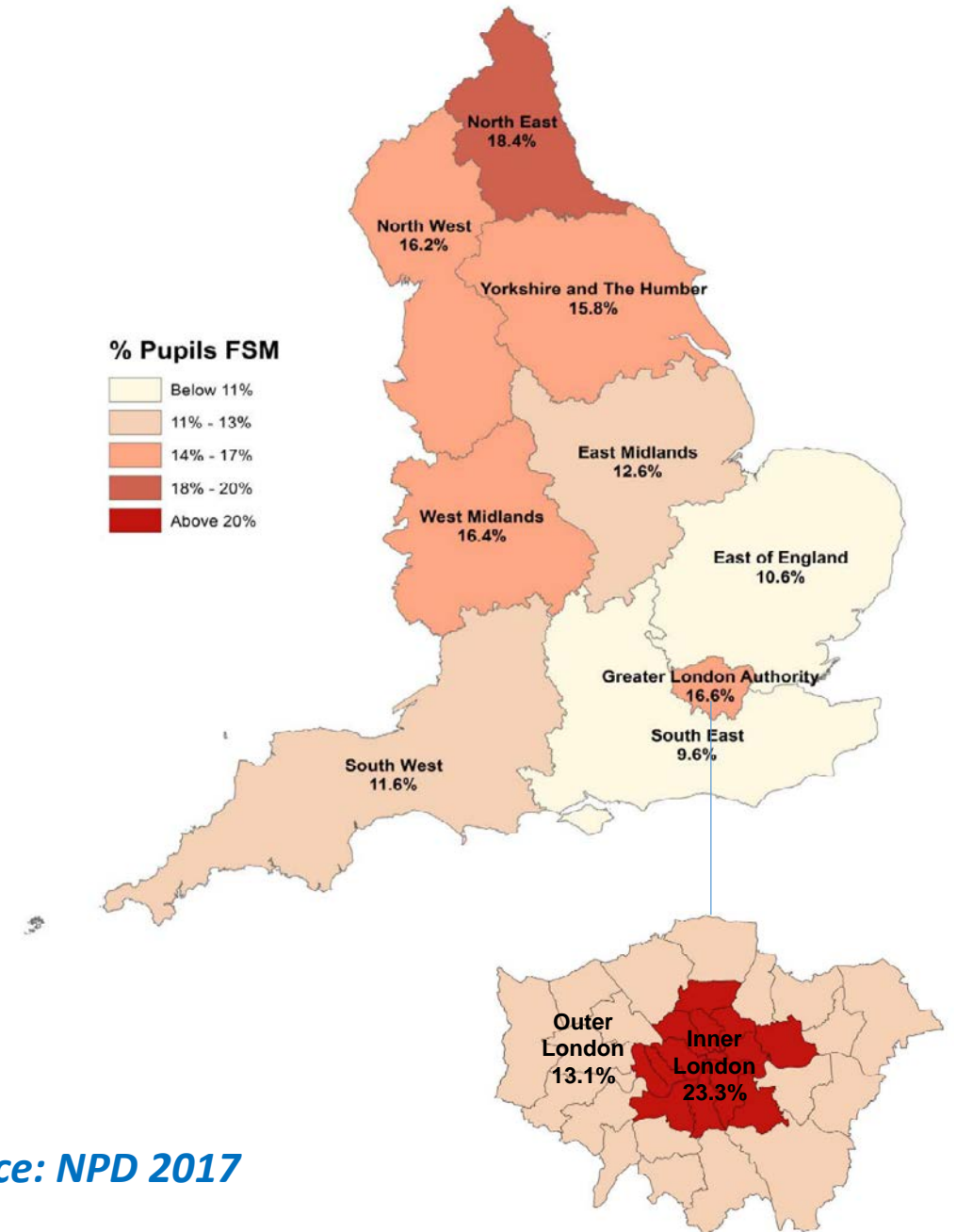
- There's also the suggestion that some low-income pupils aren't eligible for free school meals and at least some pupils fell under this bracket (NAO 2015).
- Other recent DfE surveys also suggest that there are around 200,000 pupils aged 4-15 appearing to be entitled but are 'not claiming FSM'. This may be the main reasons for decline over the period. (DfE 2012:3).
- Despite this worrying picture about a lack of reliable data, there are now over a million pupils between the ages 5 and 18 years in England who are eligible for free school meals and about 14% of the school population in England and Wales are classified as disadvantaged



[Source: DfE \(2017\). Schools, pupils and their characteristics January National tables SFR28/2017](#)

# Map of disadvantaged pupils in England by regions

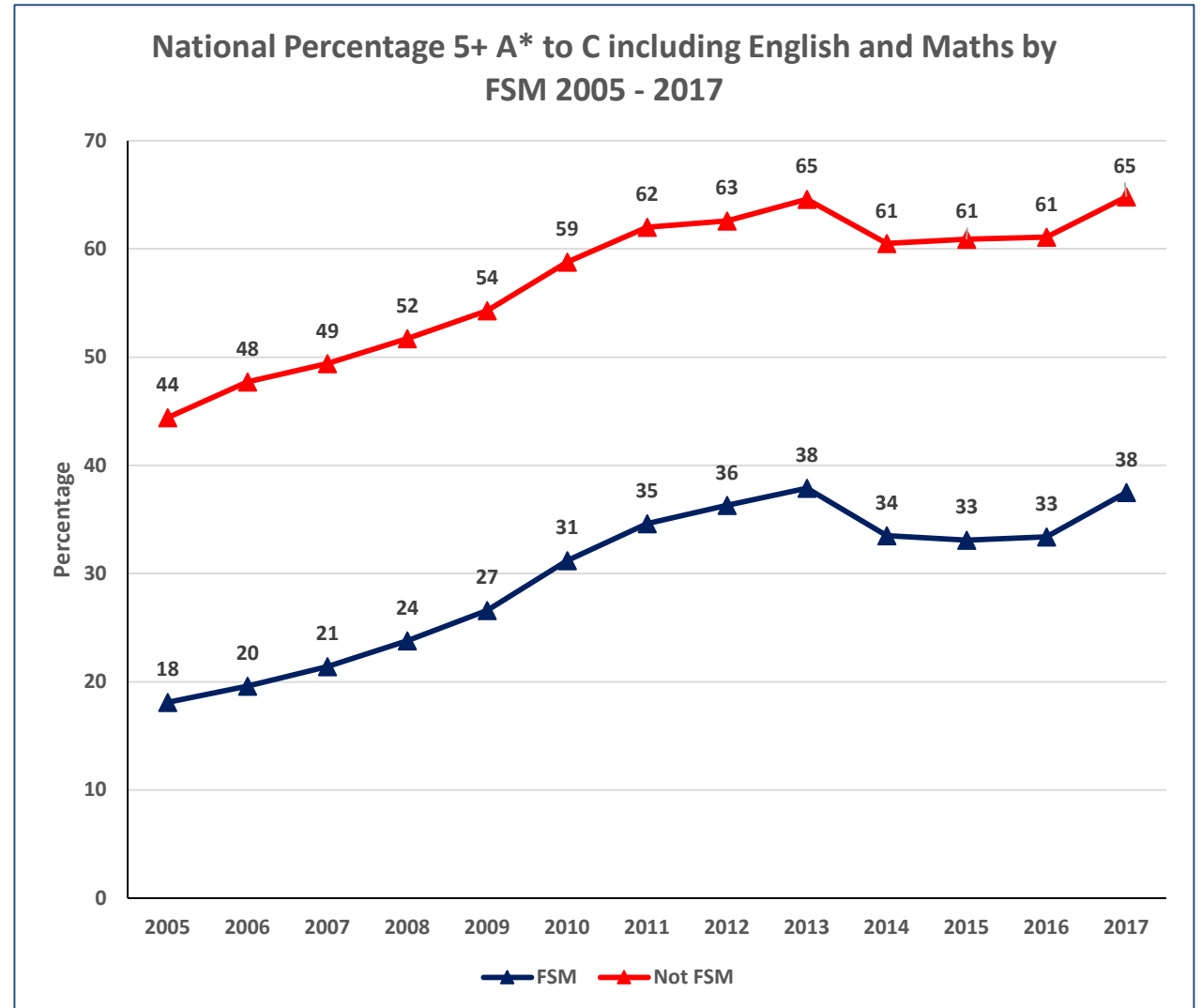
- But disadvantage is very unevenly distributed in England, varies widely across the English regions ranging from 10% in South East to 23% in inner London, 18% in North East, and 16% in Yorkshire and Humber.
- The data shows the largest numbers of disadvantaged pupils are in London with 212,238 followed by the North West with 176,140.



Source: NPD 2017

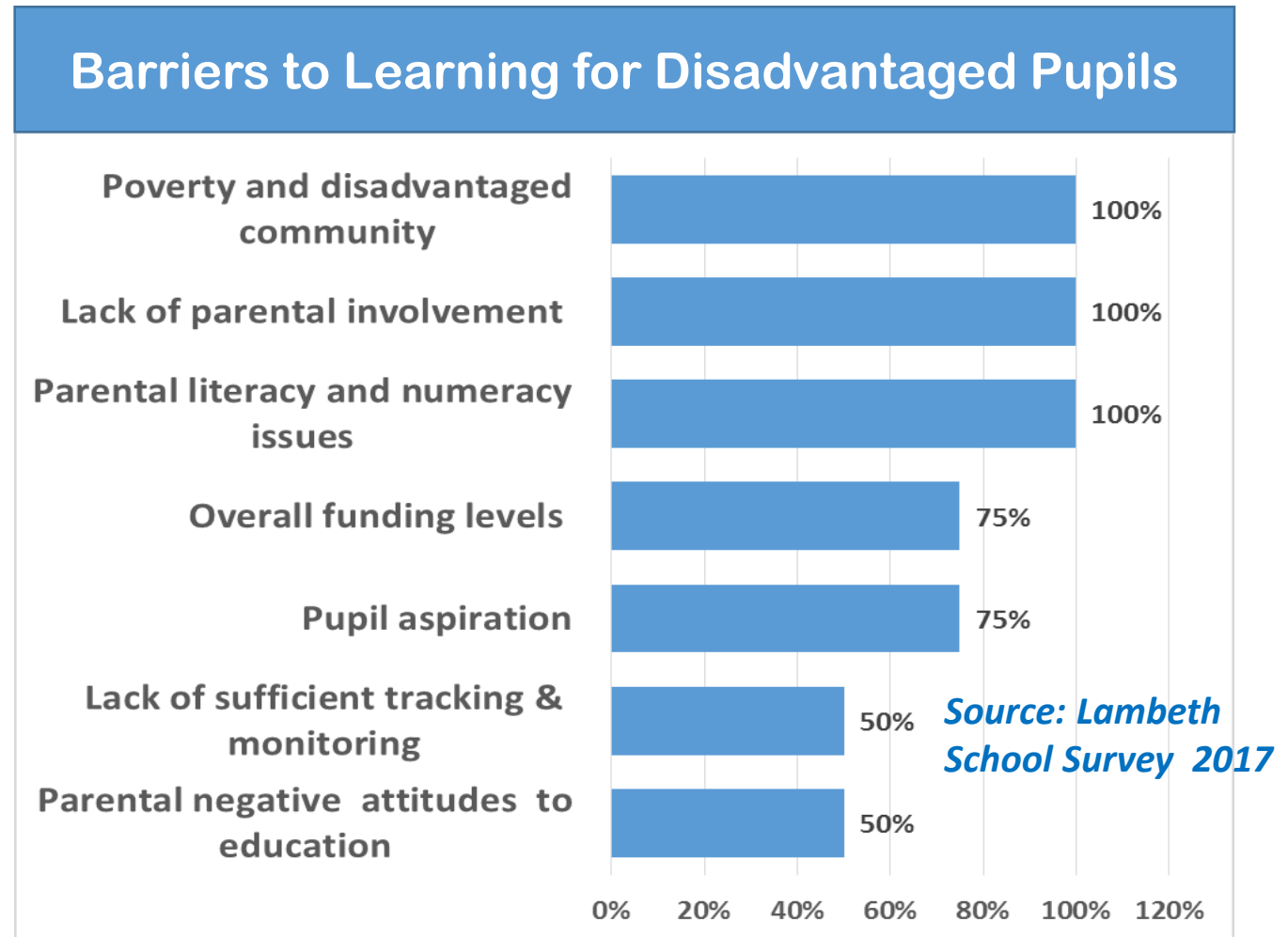
# Why does the achievement gap matter?

- Narrowing the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers is the highest challenge faced by policy makers in England.
- There are long-standing achievement gaps in England associated with socio-economic status
- Of particular concern is that children from poorer homes do worse educationally than their classmates, with 38% of pupils eligible for free school meals achieving 5+A\*-C GCSEs including English and maths, compared to 65% of better-off pupils (DfE 2017).
- There remains a significant gap between FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils.



# What does research say about the role of schools in narrowing the achievement gap?

- Recent research confirms a number of barriers to learning that need to be addressed beyond the school gates. These include factors such as:
  - poverty
  - parental negative attitudes to education
  - lack of parental involvement
  - lack of targeted support
  - curriculum barriers
  - low level of literacy in the disadvantaged community (Demie and Mclean 2016)
- School effectiveness research has shown that only about 8-15% of the attainment difference between schools is accounted for by what they actually do.
- About 85% is attributed to pupil level factors such as the wider family environment, the neighbourhood where they live and the school attended (Reynolds et al. 1966, Sammons 1999, Strand 2015).





# What does research say about the role of schools in narrowing the achievement gap?

- Bernstein (1970) argued that education cannot compensate for society and social factors have a huge impact on achievement.
- Ofsted also pointed out the factors beyond the school gates and the communities where pupils live can have a detrimental impact on achievement (Ofsted 2014:32).
- ASCL (2014) also suggested that factors influencing low achievement are beyond the control of schools and it is impossible for them to overcome the problem of poverty and disadvantage
- Overall research has shown that the gap isn't caused by schooling. Around 85% of the difference in how well children do at school is dependent on what happens outside the school gates (*Rabash et al, 2010 and Save the Children, 2013*)
- Socio-economic status is the most important difference between individuals in England. (OECD, 2007, p. 15; Strand 2015; Ofsted 2014)

Not down to schools alone to solve

# **What does the data tell us about the achievement gap for disadvantaged pupils in England?**

- **Disadvantaged pupils – All Pupils**
- **Disadvantaged pupils by Ethnic Background**
- **Disadvantaged pupils by Regions**
- **Disadvantaged pupils by Local Authorities**

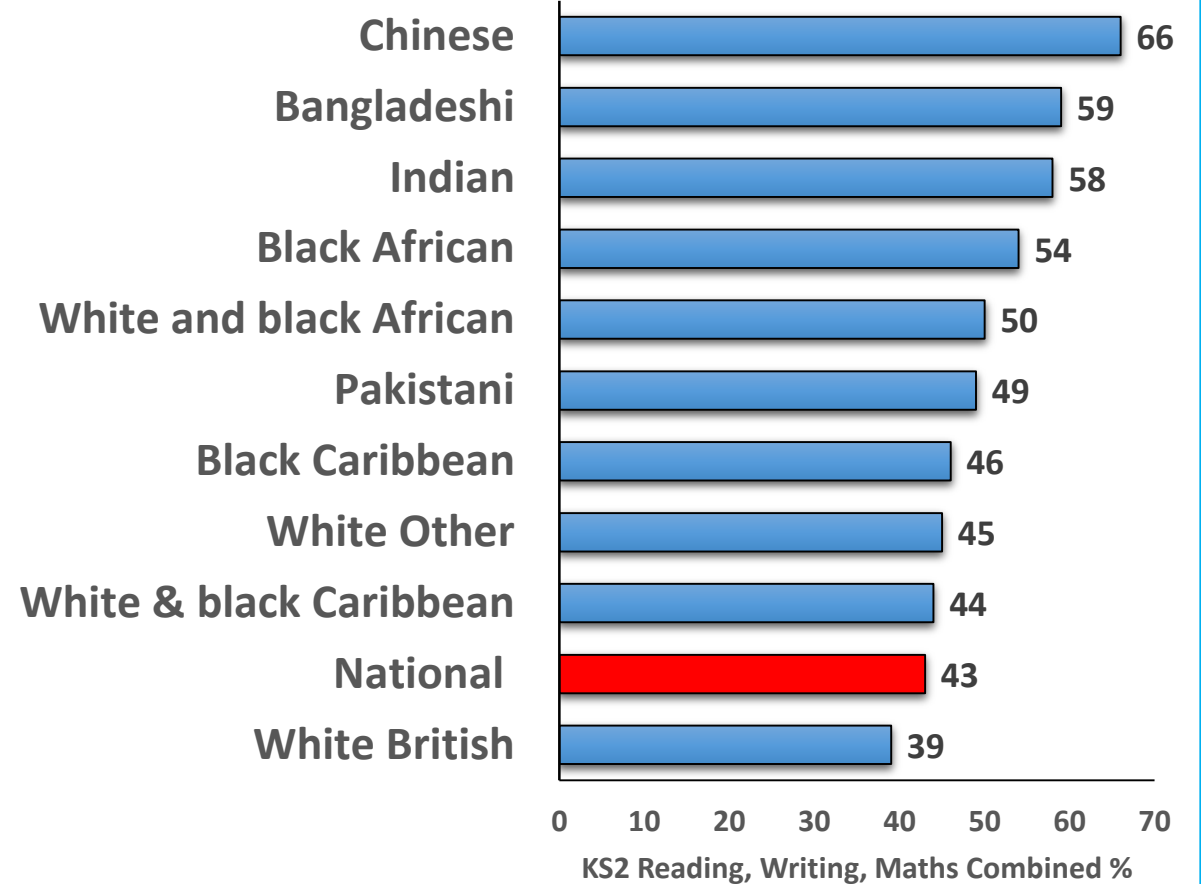
## Disadvantaged Pupils KS2 and GCSE Performance in England 2005-2017

	KS2 Performance by FSM in England 2017 (RWM Level 4+)				GCSE Performance by FSM in England (5+A*-C incl. English and Maths)			
	All Pupils	FSM	Non FSM	Gap	All Pupils	FSM	Non FSM	Gap
2005	69	48	73	-25	43	18	44	-26
2006	70	49	74	-25	44	20	48	-28
2007	71	51	75	-24	46	21	49	-28
2008	73	54	76	-22	48	24	51	-27
2009	72	54	76	-22	51	27	54	-27
2010	74	56	77	-21	55	31	59	-28
2011	67	49	71	-22	58	35	62	-27
2012	74	59	78	-19	59	36	63	-27
2013	75	60	79	-19	61	38	65	-27
2014	78	64	82	-18	57	34	61	-27
2015	80	66	83	-17	57	33	61	-28
2016	53	35	57	-22	58	33	61	-28
2017	61	43	64	-21	61	38	65	-27

Source: DfE SFR

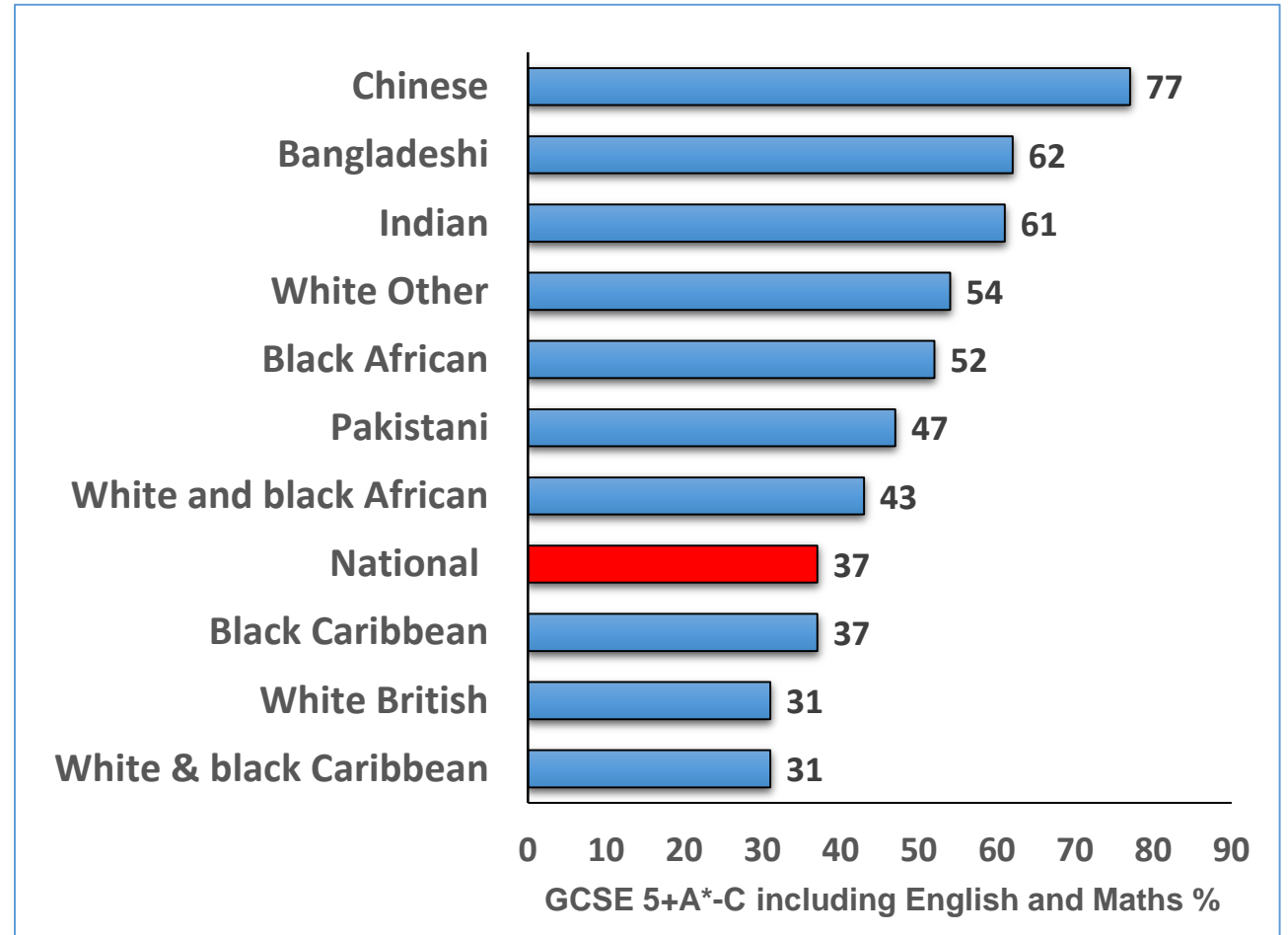
# KS2 Performance in England by Ethnic Background and FSM (%) 2017

Ethnicity	FSM	Non FSM	Gap
Chinese	66	77	-11
Bangladeshi	59	66	-7
Indian	58	72	-14
Black African	54	65	-11
White and black African	50	66	-16
Pakistani	49	57	-8
Black Caribbean	46	57	-11
White Other	45	57	-12
White & black Caribbean	44	60	-16
<b>National</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>-21</b>
White British	39	65	-26



# GCSE Performance in England by Ethnic Background and FSM (%) 2017

Ethnicity	FSM	Non FSM	Gap
Chinese	77	85	-8
Bangladeshi	62	70	-8
Indian	61	79	-18
White Other	54	62	-8
Black African	52	65	-13
Pakistani	47	60	-13
White and black African	43	64	-21
Black Caribbean	37	51	-14
<b>National</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>-28</b>
White & black Caribbean	31	55	-24
White British	31	64	-33



Source: NPD 2017

# **KS2 and GCSE Performance in England by Ethnic Background and FSM (%) 2017**

- 1. There is a marked difference in KS2 and GCSE performance between pupils eligible for free school meals and the most economically advantaged groups in schools.**
- 2. Overall the evidence from free school meals (FSM) data is that:**
  - Black Caribbean and White British children eligible for FSM are consistently the lowest performing ethnic groups of children from low income households**
  - The attainment gap between those children eligible for free school meals and the remainder is wider for Black Caribbean, White British and Mixed White and Black Caribbean than any other ethnic groups**
  - The gap widens particularly at the end of secondary education for White British and Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils**
  - Chinese, Bangladeshi and Indian disadvantaged pupils tend to significantly outperform the White British majority**

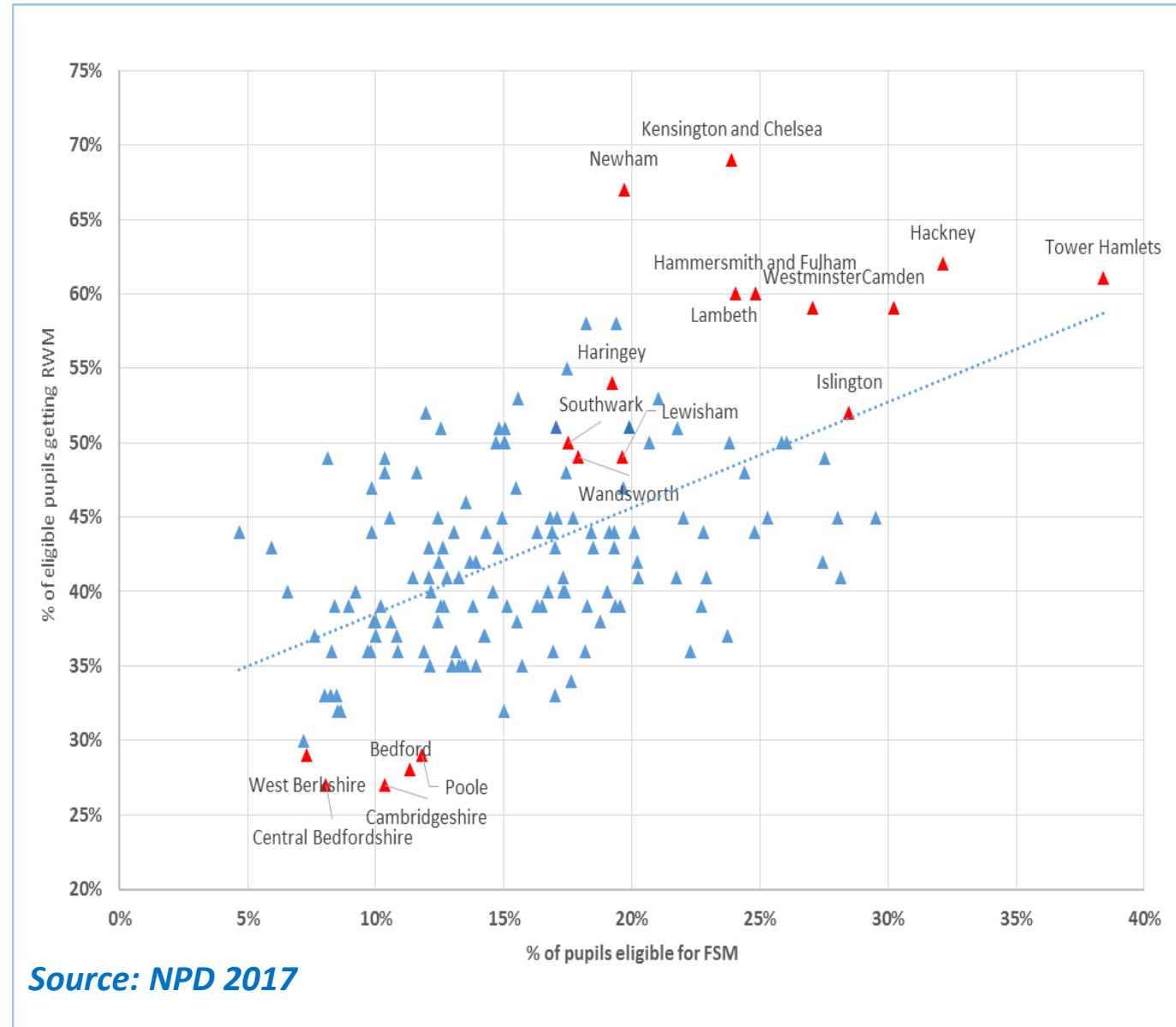
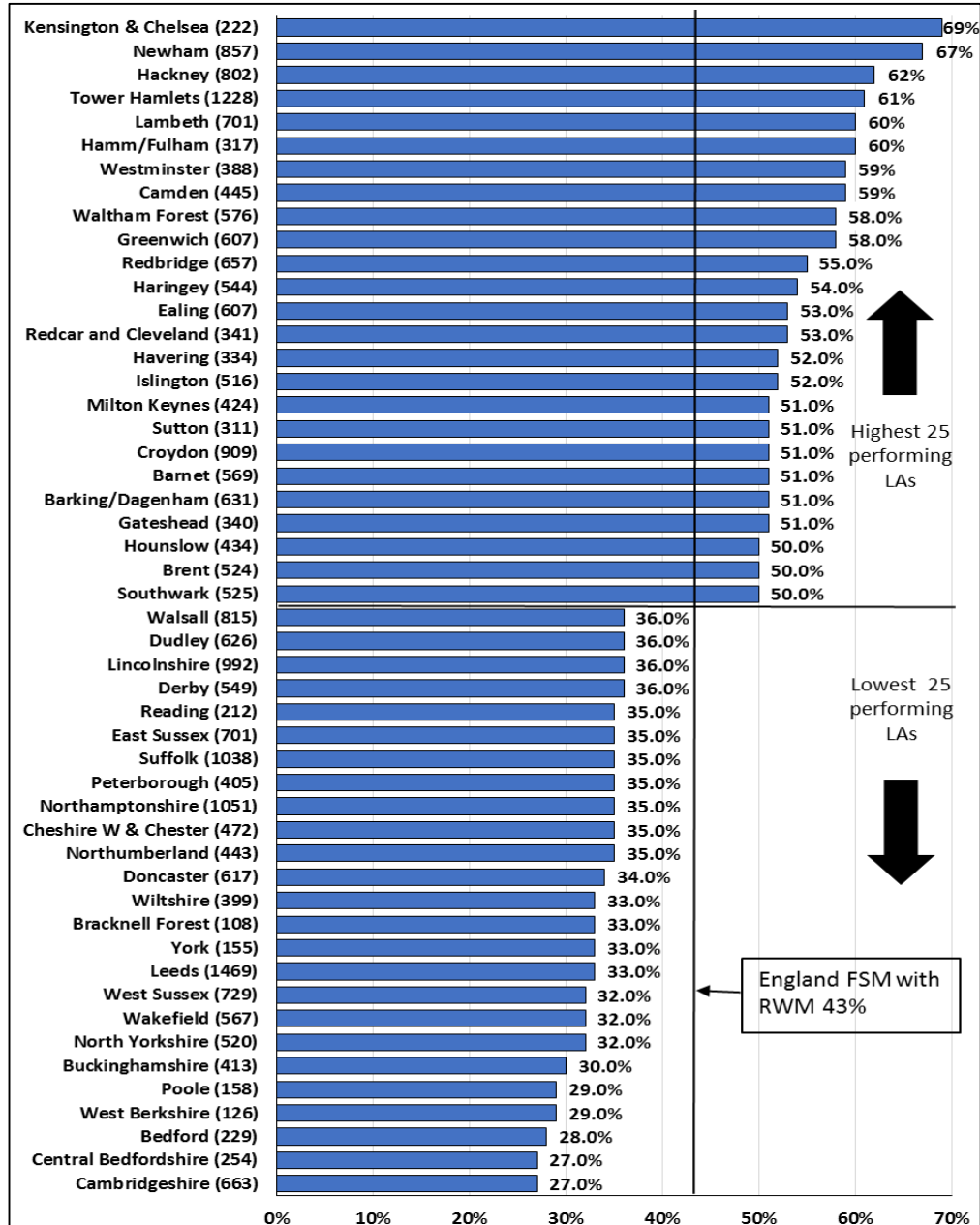
# KS2 and GCSE performance of pupils eligible for FSM by regions

- The analysis of the achievement of Key Stage 2 and GCSE pupils by the region of England revealed wide variations in performance and in the achievement
- Key findings from the data show that at KS2 Inner London and Outer London have the highest density of disadvantaged pupils in England and also appear to perform better than disadvantaged pupils in other parts of the country
- The GCSE data also revealed that disadvantaged pupils living in the South East, East England, East Midlands, South West and the North East showed the biggest gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils when compared to national average.

Region	KS2 Reading, Writing and Maths (% expected level)			GCSE (% 5+ A*-C incl. English and Maths)		
	Non-FSM	FSM	Gap	Non-FSM	FSM	Gap
North East	69%	46%	-23%	63%	32%	-31%
North West	65%	43%	-22%	64%	35%	-28%
Yorkshire and The Humber	62%	39%	-23%	63%	34%	-29%
East Midlands	62%	39%	-23%	63%	32%	-31%
West Midlands	63%	42%	-21%	62%	36%	-27%
East England	64%	38%	-26%	65%	34%	-31%
London	70%	54%	-16%	69%	50%	-19%
Inner London	71%	58%	-13%	67%	53%	-14%
Outer London	70%	50%	-20%	69%	46%	-23%
South East	65%	39%	-26%	66%	32%	-34%
South West	63%	39%	-24%	64%	33%	-31%
England	65%	43%	-22%	65%	37%	-28%

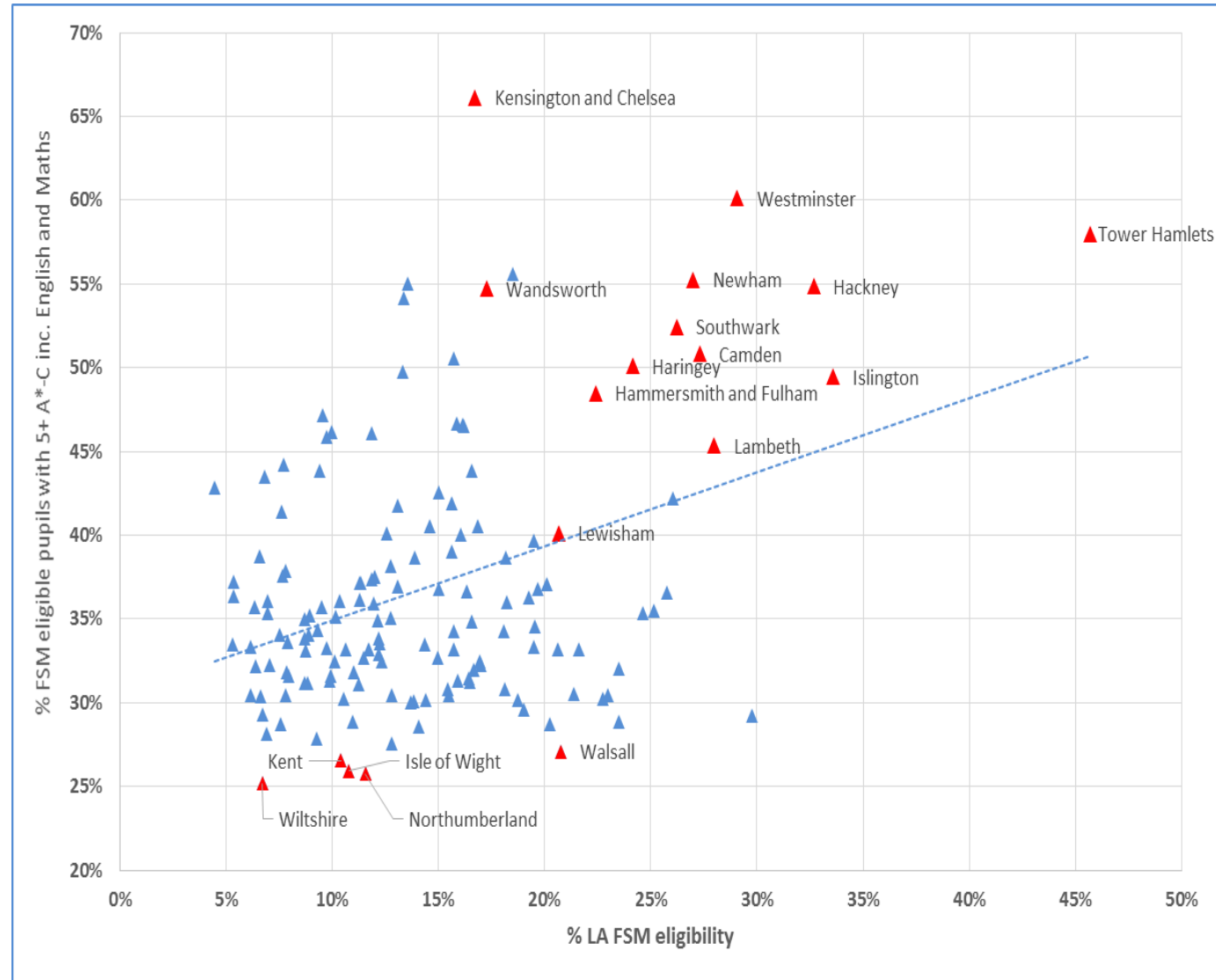
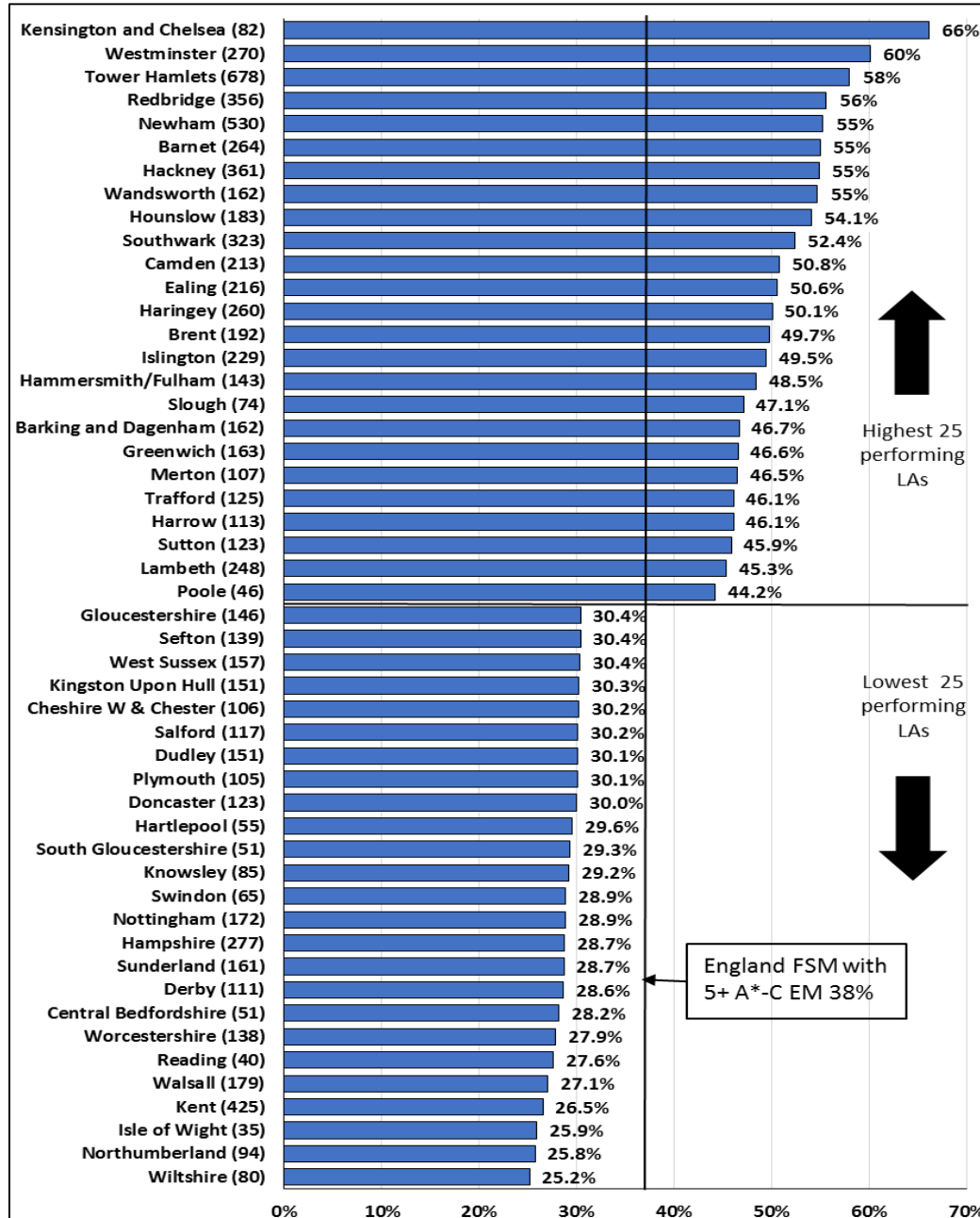
Source: NPD 2017

# KS2 attainment: % of FSM pupils achieving KS2 RWM combined 2017 by LA



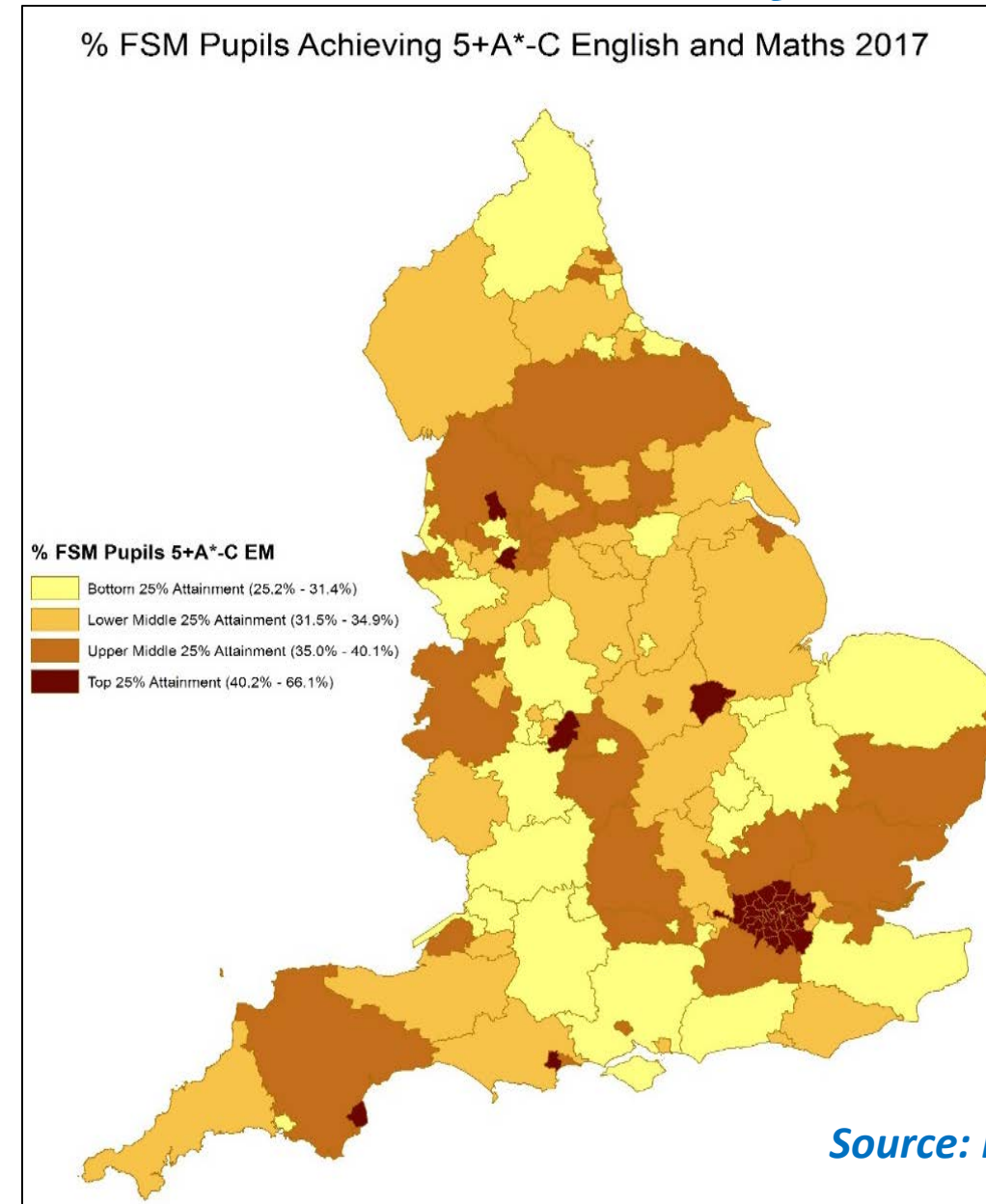
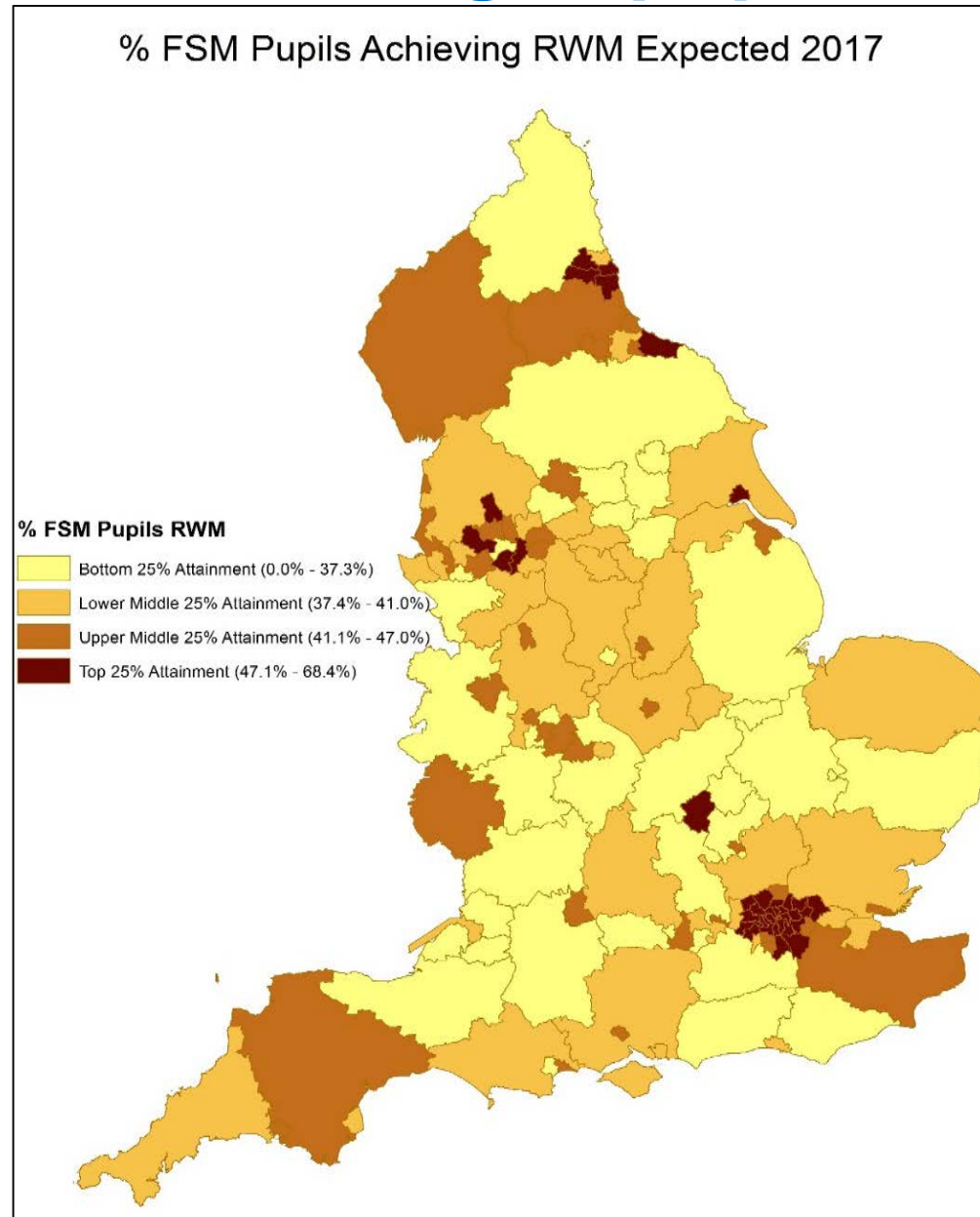


# GCSE attainment: % of FSM pupils achieving 5+A\*-C incl. English and Maths by LA



Source: NPD 2017

# Disadvantaged pupils KS2 and GCSE results by LAs

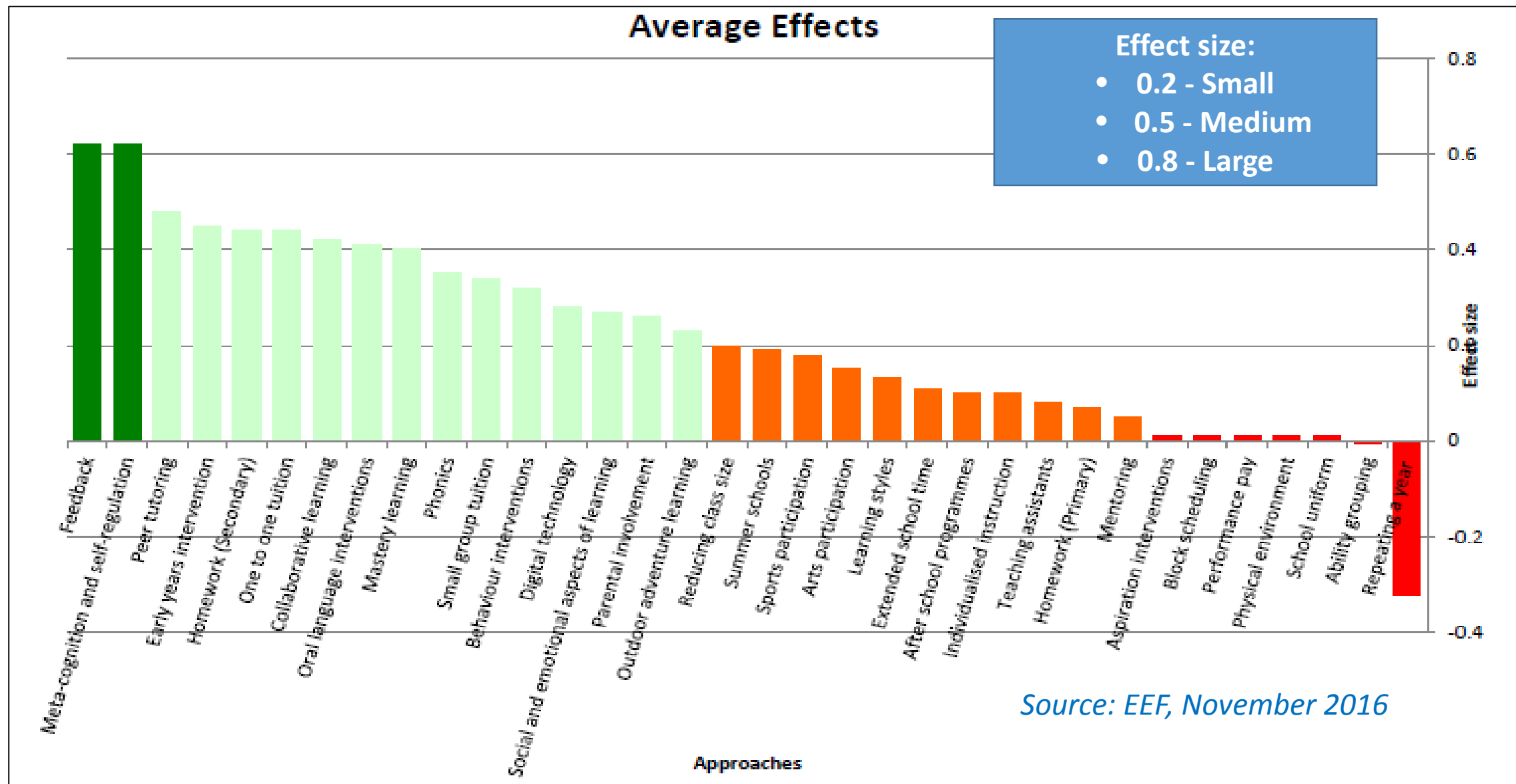


Source: NPD 2017

# **What does research tell us about the most effective strategies in raising achievement?**

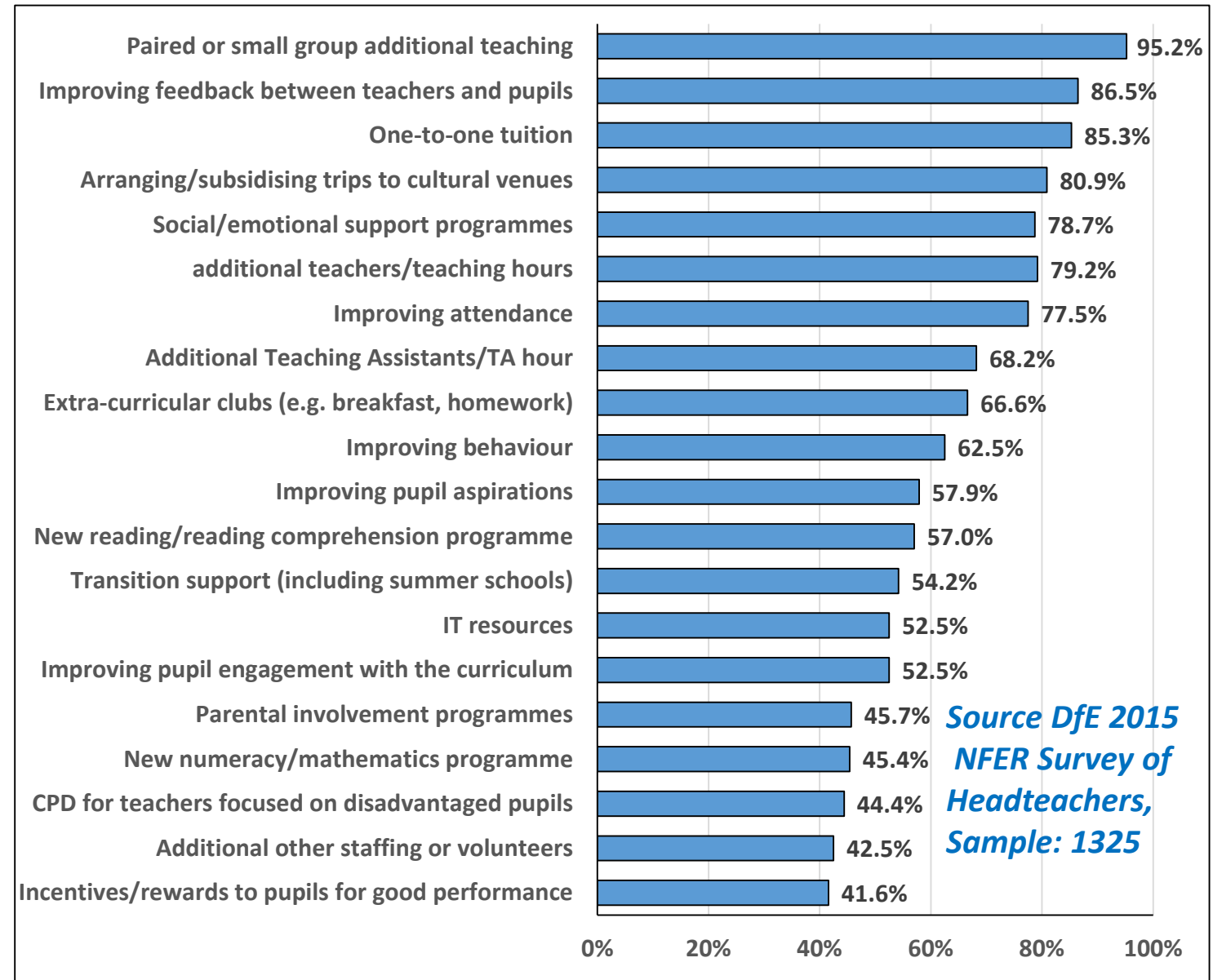
- **EEF Research Evidence**
- **DfE Headteacher Survey**
- **Lambeth Headteacher Survey**
- **Lambeth Case Study Schools Evidence**

# Effective Intervention strategies used by all schools to raise attainment: *Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Evidence*

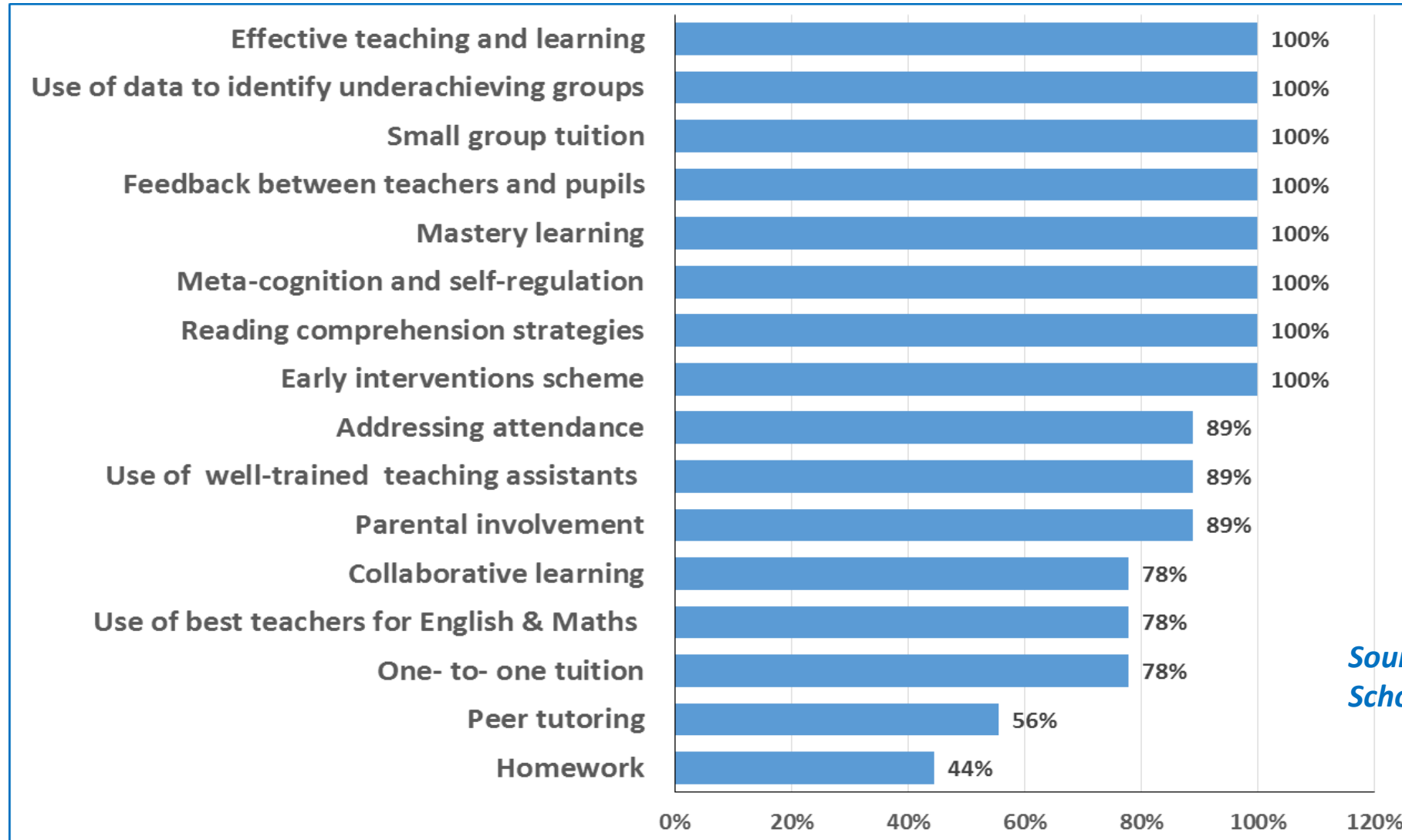


# Most popular strategies used by all schools to raise attainment of disadvantaged pupils: DfE Survey of Headteachers

- The survey asked schools to select the strategies they had used to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils
- Schools had used a range of different types of strategies, most of which focused on teaching and learning
- The most common strategies were paired or small group additional teaching; improved feedback between teachers and pupils and one-to-one
- The seven least popular strategies were: peer-to-peer tutoring, new homework strategy, other teaching and learning strategy, extending school time, other resources, new speaking and listening programme and other strategy, metacognition and collaborative learning

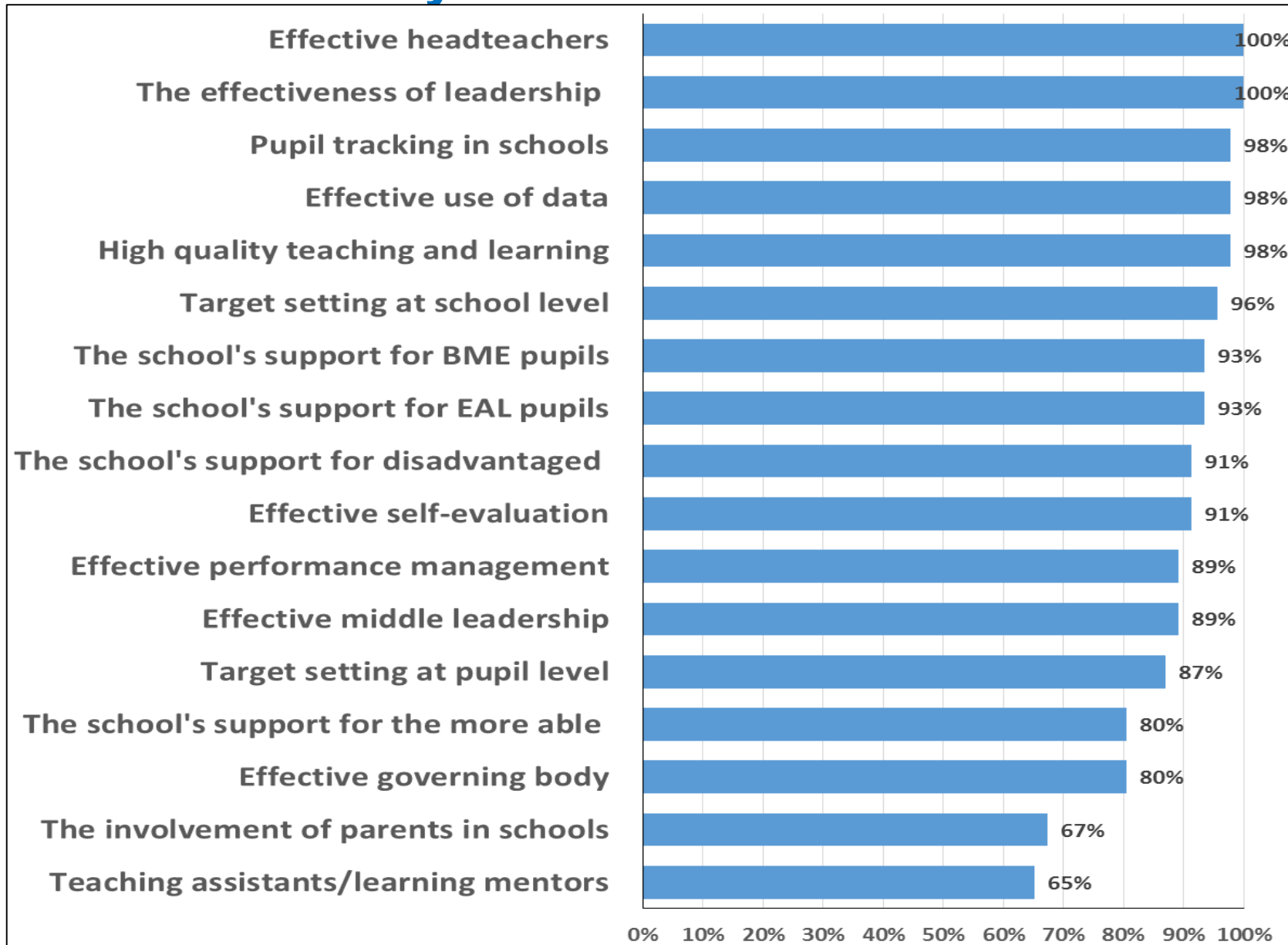


# The most effective strategies for closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils: Lambeth Survey of Headteachers



*Source: Lambeth School Survey 2018*

# Factors contributing to improved school KS2 and GCSE results: Lambeth School Survey



*Source: Lambeth  
School Survey 2018*

# Effective strategies for closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils: Lessons from Lambeth case study

The Lambeth case study research and survey identifies a number of factors that are successful in closing the gap:

1. Providing strong leadership
2. High quality first teaching
3. Effective use of data
4. Inclusive curriculum
5. Targeted support through the following intervention strategies:
  - Small group additional support
  - One to one tuition
  - Effective feedback
  - Use of best teachers to teach English/maths
  - Booster classes using class teachers
  - Improving behaviour and attendance
  - Enrichment activities eg Trips
  - Parental involvement
  - Early intervention
  - Mastery learning

Case Study Schools KS2 Reading, Writing and Maths- % Reaching Expected Standard								
FSM	Free School Meals 2017				Pupil Premium 2017			
	ALL	FSM	non FSM	Gap	All	PP	non PP	Gap
School A	93%	100%	92%	8%	93%	94%	92%	2%
School B	54%	52%	56%	-4%	54%	56%	52%	3%
School C	77%	80%	76%	4%	77%	77%	78%	0%
School D	93%	91%	94%	-3%	93%	95%	90%	5%
School E	66%	69%	62%	7%	66%	64%	43%	21%
Case Study	74%	72%	75%	-3%	72%	71%	74%	-3%
National	61%	43%	64%	-21%	61%	48%	67%	-19%



# Conclusions (1)

- **There is a marked difference in KS2 and GCSE performance between pupils eligible for free school meals and the most economically advantaged groups in schools.**
- **The national gap for FSM and non-FSM at KS2 is 21% and GCSE is 27%**
- **Of particular concern is that children from poorer homes do worse educationally than their classmates, with 38% of pupils eligible for free school meals achieving 5+A\*-C GCSEs including English and maths, compared to 65% of better-off pupils**
- **Black Caribbean and White British children eligible for FSM are consistently the lowest performing ethnic groups of children from low income households**
- **Inner London and Outer London have the highest density of disadvantaged pupils in England and also appear to perform better than disadvantaged pupils in other parts of the country**
- **The KS2 and GCSE gap in achievement between disadvantaged and their peers in all regions are high, with exception in London.**

# Conclusions (2)

- 1. The findings suggest that disadvantage need not always be a barrier to achievement. The case study schools were good at challenging poverty.**
- 2. The research identified the following success factors:**
  - **Providing strong leadership**
  - **Ensuring access to high quality first teaching**
  - **Effective use of data**
  - **Providing inclusive curriculum**
  - **Targeted interventions**
- 3. The most common targeted intervention strategies in the case study schools were:**
  - **Small group additional teaching**
  - **Improved feedback between teachers and pupils**
  - **One-to-one tuition**
  - **Use of the best teachers to teach English and Maths**
  - **Well trained TA**
  - **Parental involvement**
  - **Enrichment programmes e.g. trips to cultural venues**

# Key Messages for School Leaders and Policy Makers

- **The study argues that the improvement made by disadvantaged pupils in the case study schools is an exceptional achievement and offers a useful example of a success story that is worth learning from by schools, central government and local authorities**
- **The lessons from the successful case study schools suggest that it is possible to tackle the link between poverty and underachievement**
- **Some of the approaches used in the successful schools can be applied elsewhere**
- **However, it is important to recognise that there is no ‘pick and mix’ option. An effective school will seek to develop all these characteristics underpinned by practical use of data to monitor the achievement of particular groups to pinpoint and tackle underachievement**

# End of Presentation - Thank You

## QUESTIONS?

Contact: [fdemie@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:fdemie@lambeth.gov.uk)

Good Practice research report website:

<http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/rsu/research-reports>