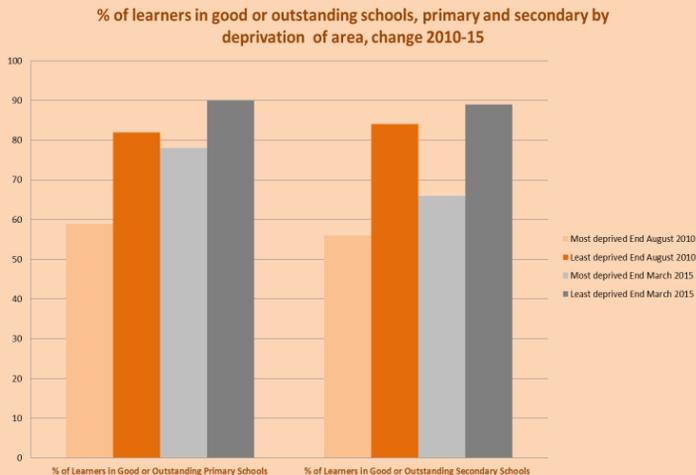


The Government is rightly committed to ensuring all children fulfil their potential in school

- ▶ There are welcome efforts towards tougher standards, a core curriculum and a greater focus on progress in accountability measures.
- ▶ Schools are more likely to be good or outstanding than 5 years ago; and 10,000 more poor children got good GCSEs in 2015 compared to 2005.
- ▶ Increasing numbers of schools have broken the link between demography and destiny with the attainment of their poorest students far exceeding the national average.
- ▶ But there is a stubbornly large attainment gap in England. Poor children start school behind and make less progress than other children when in school, which widens the gap in the school years. Progress in secondary schools stalls for many poor children.

The biggest weakness in the schools system is the large variation in standards

- ▶ School quality remains very patchy across England and poor children are less likely to go to the best schools.
- ▶ Children in the wealthiest areas are 12% more likely to go to a good primary school and almost 25% more likely to go to a good secondary school than children from the most deprived areas.



There are too few high quality teachers in the areas that need them most

- ▶ A high quality teaching workforce is essential both to narrowing the attainment gap and to delivering on the Government's schools reform programme
- ▶ Teacher training: Efforts to increase the number and quality of trainee teachers need to go further. Teacher-training places for many subjects are not being filled. Only 82% of places in secondary school were filled in 2015/16.

- ▶ **Teacher pay:** Entry level teacher pay is falling behind other graduate jobs and teacher pay elsewhere in the OECD.
- ▶ **Teacher quality:** Difficulties in recruiting teachers risks creating a quality problem. In 2014, 20% of maths lessons in secondary schools were being taught by teachers without a relevant qualification - an increase from 17% in 2013.
- ▶ **Teacher incentives:** There are few incentives to encourage teachers to work in the most challenging schools. A commission survey found that just 15% of teachers would actively seek out work in more challenging schools.

Schools are not sufficiently focused on preparing the poorest children for life after school

- ▶ Schools do not focus enough on destinations (where their pupils go next). Success in exams must not be seen as an end in itself.
- ▶ There are big geographic variations in the extent to which young people from poor households access the best universities. Areas where disproportionately few poor pupils progress to university need to look to areas which do well.
- ▶ The Commission's Cracking the Code report (2014) highlighted examples of schools working hard to prepare their students for the world beyond, including: early engagement with employers and university, NEET prevention and social and cultural capital building.

Government should address these problems. The Commission recommends:

1. Tackle underperforming schools

- Government should adopt a zero tolerance approach to schools which fail their pupils and their communities for more than five years in a row

2. Launch social mobility measures

- Government should demonstrate its commitment to narrowing the attainment gap by launching a new set of social mobility measures at a national, local authority and school level and should increase transparency on destinations.

3. Teacher pay

- Pay and reward for new teachers should be overhauled;
- Fees for teacher training and the bursary scheme should be scrapped; the bar for entry to training should be lowered; and the bar for qualification, raised.

4. New teacher incentives

- New incentives should be introduced to get more good teachers into the most challenging schools;
- Local approaches to incentivise teachers to move to areas where they are most needed should be piloted.