How are more effective schools supporting disadvantaged pupils to achieve?

SSAT National Conference 2016: Quality and Equity

Shona Macleod, December 2015

Content of my presentation

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Aims and study design

1
- What are the characteristics of schools identified with success in raising disadvantaged pupils' attainment? **(Analysis of national performance data)**

2
- What *quantity* and *mix* of strategies are being implemented in more and less successful schools? **(Surveys of over 1,300 schools)**

3
- How does implementation influence success? **(Interviews with 49 school leaders)**

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Implications of study design

Findings are correlations: they should not be interpreted as evidence of causal relationships

The importance of supporting disadvantaged pupils

The attainment gap has narrowed slightly in recent years
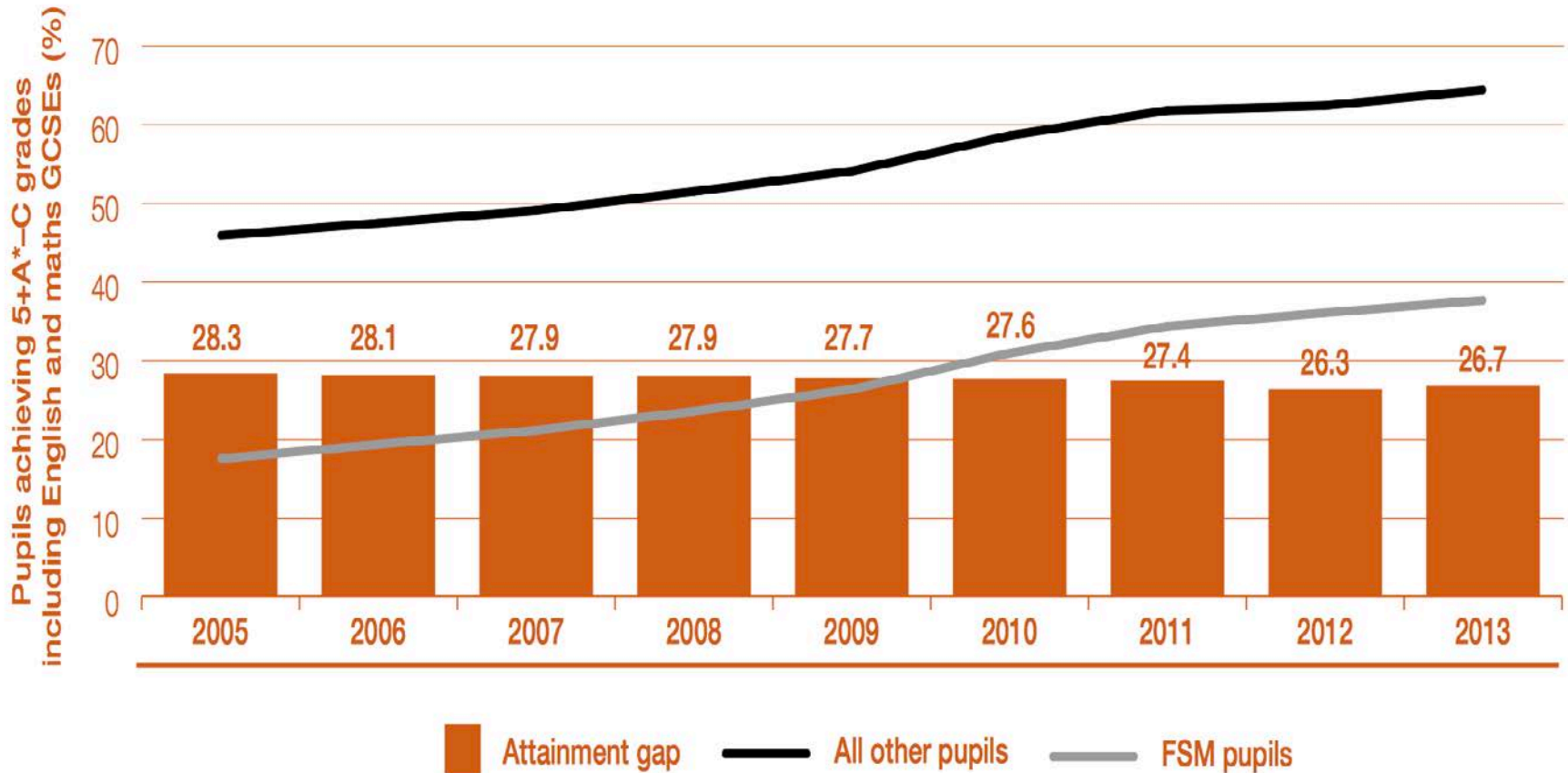
Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014)

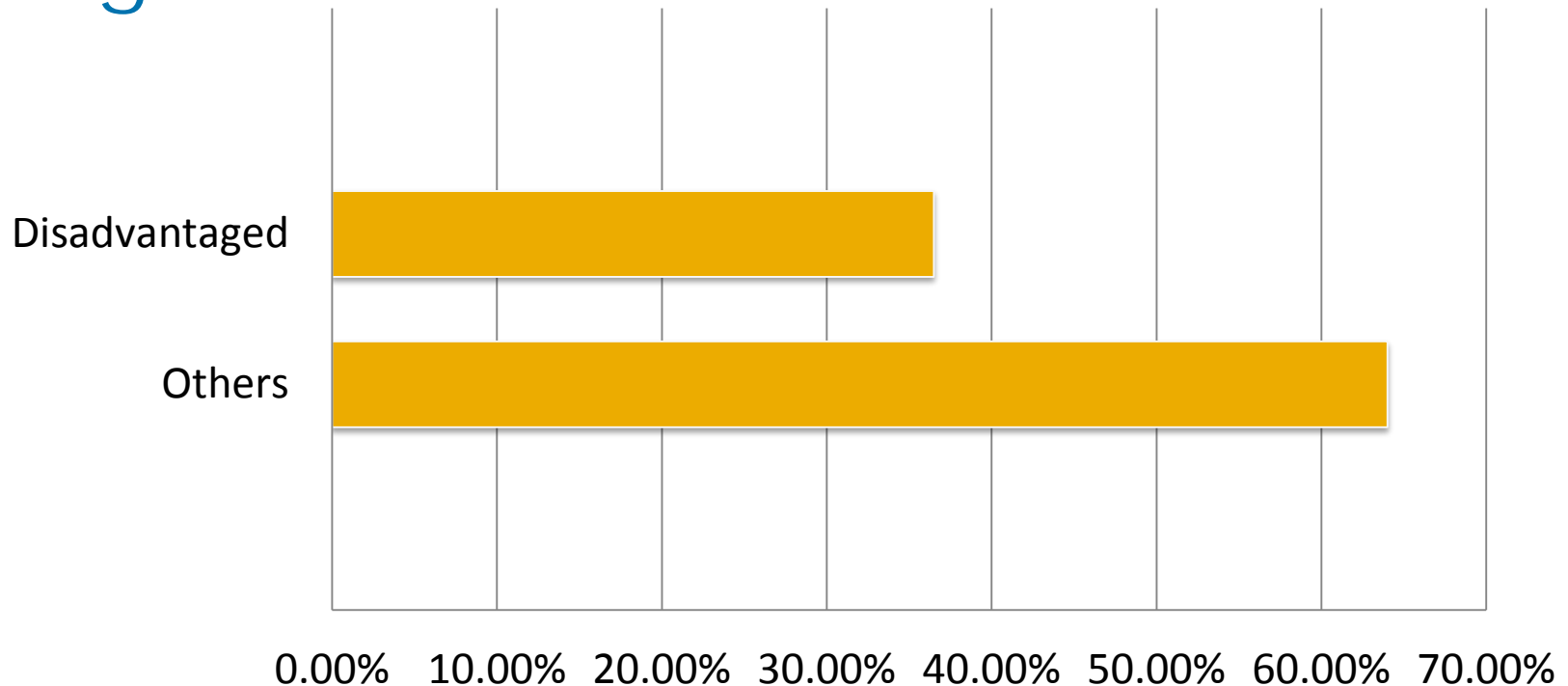# Attainment gap in 2014: Percentage achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths

The attainment gap in 2014 was 27.5 percentage points (Source DfE, 2015)

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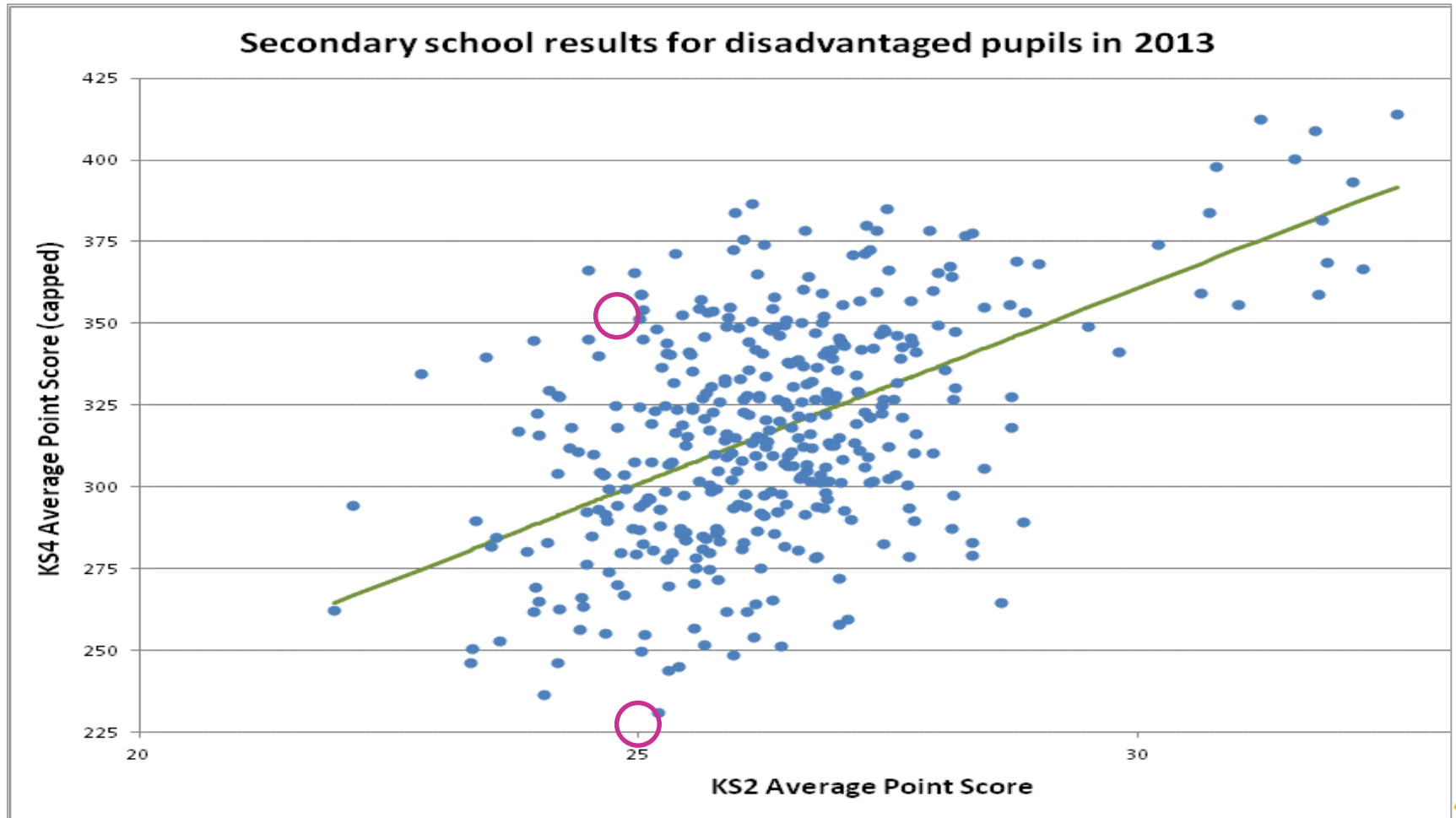# Negative consequences for disadvantaged pupils include

Lower wages

Higher unemployment

Poverty is transmitted from one generation to the next

Disadvantaged pupils perform much better in some schools than others: schools can make a difference

Secondary school results for disadvantaged pupils in 2013

Source: NFER analysis of national data

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Key approaches of more successful schools

Features of schools which have raised disadvantaged pupils' attainment

1. Whole-school ethos of attainment for all

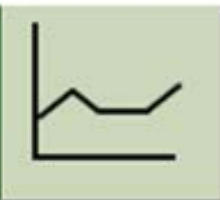**2. Addressing behaviour and attendance**

3. High quality teaching for all

4. Meeting individual learning needs

5. Deploying staff effectively

6. Data driven and responding to evidence

7. Clear, responsive leadership

1. Whole school ethos of attainment for all

More successful schools see pupils as individuals rather than stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as a group with similar problems and less potential to achieve.

They take responsibility for helping all pupils succeed

Successful schools avoid stereotyping disadvantaged pupils

Whatever we throw at these disadvantaged children, some of them are still struggling to make that progress. They just haven't got it… So we don't throw loads at these children. They make the progress that I think they're capable of.

Headteacher, less successful primary school

When I am talking about our disadvantaged students I am absolutely determined that I see each of them as an individual rather than generalising them and moulding them together.
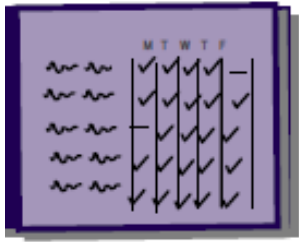
Senior leader, more successful primary school

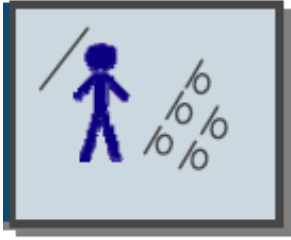● independent ● insights ● breadth ● connections ● outcomes

2. Addressing behaviour and attendance

More successful schools have effective attendance and behaviour strategies

They follow up quickly with individuals and families

They provide emotional support to address underlying issues

3. High quality teaching for all

More successful schools emphasise high quality teaching first

They invest in staff training, monitor performance and share good practice

Why high quality teaching matters so much

For poor pupils the difference between a good teacher and a bad teacher is a whole year's learning.

Sutton Trust (2011)

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4. Meeting individual learning needs

Staff work to identify barriers, interests and what might help each pupil make the next steps in learning.

They provide targeted support for under-performing pupils during curriculum time, in addition to learning support outside school hours.
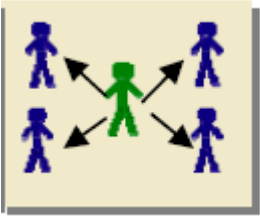
They seek strategies best suited to addressing individual needs, rather than just fitting pupils into their existing support strategies.
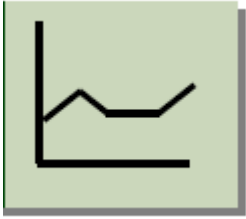
5. Deploying staff effectively

More successful schools identify the strengths of each staff member

They devolve responsibility to frontline staff and use TAs well

They deploy their best staff to work with pupils who need the most support

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6. Data driven and responding to evidence

More successful schools review progress every few weeks, spot any signs of underperformance and address them quickly.

Teachers engage with the data themselves: they input, analyse and use it to underpin their teaching.

They have a consistent marking scheme which recognises pupils' achievements and sets out the next steps in their learning.

They monitor the success of support strategies and make evidence-based decisions about whether to keep, adjust or replace.
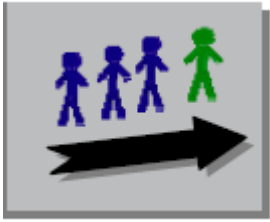
7. Clear, responsive leadership

Senior leaders in more successful schools ensure that staff are willing to do whatever it takes to help each pupil to succeed.

They hold every staff member accountable for pupils' progress.

They share their thinking and work collaboratively. They ensure their schools are linked into key local/national networks.

They ensure staff share best practice.

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Common features of schools' pathways to improvement

What more successful schools told us

There is no 'magic bullet'

Achieving better results takes time

The quality of implementation is important

Schools' pathways to success

Basic
Attendance, behaviour & emotional support. High quality teaching

Intermediate
Introduce T&L strategies and individualise approaches

Embedded
Focus more strongly on taking calculated risks, using data and early intervention

Continued development
Seek opportunities to share and improve practice

Timescale 3-5 years

School risk factors

Characteristics associated with poorer performance of disadvantaged pupils at key stages 2 and 4

Schools with:

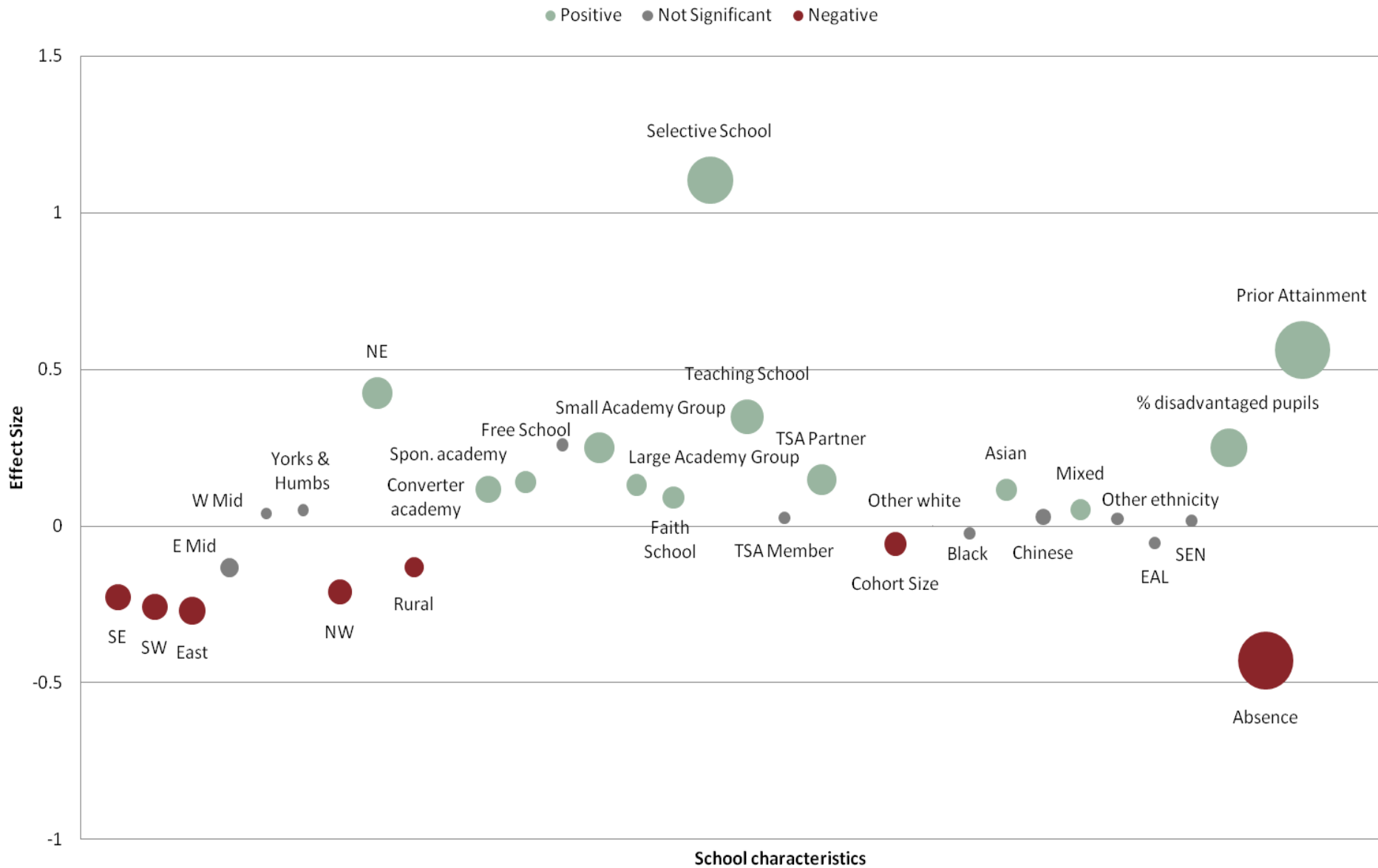- Disadvantaged pupils who had lower results on entry
- Higher levels of pupil absence
- A lower proportion of disadvantaged pupils

Schools located in certain regions, especially:

- South East
- South West
- East
- North West

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School characteristics and KS4 CAPS results for disadvantaged pupils

School characteristics and KS4 CAPS results for disadvantaged pupils

How to address risk factors?

If a school has fewer disadvantaged pupils?

If a school has larger year groups?

If a school is in a lower-performing area?

If a school has disadvantaged pupils with low prior attainment?

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Some thoughts on how to address risk factors

If your school has fewer disadvantaged pupils or larger year groups, make sure they are not getting 'lost in the system'?

If your school has little PP funding, focus on low-cost targeted strategies ?

If your school is in a lower-performing area, use national comparisons and models of best practice?

If your disadvantaged pupils have low prior attainment, identify and address under-performance when they enter your school?

Conclusions

- Schools can make a key difference to the life chances of disadvantaged pupils

- There is no single strategy or set of strategies that make the difference

- Investing in high quality teaching is key

- Schools need to make their own choices, monitor progress regularly and take action

- The quality of implementation is as important as the choice of strategies.

What's your view?

What's your response to the building blocks of success?

Does the four-stage improvement journey reflect your experience?

Have you got any other suggestions about how to address the risk factors?

How can you use these findings to inform your work?

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Resources for schools

Useful resources

- The families of schools tool: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/families-of-schools/

- Sutton Trust/EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/toolkit-a-z/

- Pupil Premium Review Guide: http://tscouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Pupil-Premium-Review-Guide-v1-2.pdf

- Pupil Premium Awards case studies: http://www.pupilpremiumawards.co.uk/ppawards2015/2013

- Details of this research and briefing for schools are available on the DfE and NFER websites: www.gov.uk/government/publications and www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/PUPP01

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References

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Department for Education (2015). *GCSE and Equivalent Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, 2013 to 2014 (Revised) (Statistical First Release 06/2015)*

Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014). *State of the Nation 2014: Social Mobility and Child Poverty in Great Britain. London: The Stationery Office*

The Sutton Trust (2011). *Improving the Impact of Teachers on Pupil Achievement In the UK: Interim Findings.* London: The Sutton Trust

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