Enhancing Equity & Raising Standards: messages from school & teacher effectiveness research for education policy reform

Keynote Presentation for

Gender Differences in Educational Achievement Conference

17-18 November 2009

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Content of Presentation

- **Characteristics of more and less effective schools**

- **School effectiveness & school improvement knowledge base**

- **Effective teaching**

- **Role of school leadership**

- **Case studies of effective schools**

- **Pre-school influences – the EPPE3-11 research**

- **Implications for the promotion of equity & education reform**

QUESTIONS

- How far do different education systems replicate existing inequalities?

- How far can education help to combat the effects of disadvantage?

Defining Equity and Equality in Education

► **Formal equality of access/provision**

► **Equality of participation (treatment)**

► **Equality of outcome**

- **Although schools are important in the development of social inclusion wider social and economic policies are also highly relevant**

- **School effectiveness & improvement research seeks to study and work with practitioners to enhance understanding about the processes of effective and improving schools in different and equity considerations remain a key focus**

Equity Challenges for Educators

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely than others to experience educational failure

Reasons for addressing such failure

philosophical/ethical **- to promote fairness improvement in quality of life and opportunities for all groups, to encourage positive attitudes to future learning and self-esteem**

political **- to promote social cohesion and inclusion and empower young people as citizens to participate in a successful democracy**

economic **- to promote future prosperity & prevent waste of talent & avoid social/economic burden on public purse**

Intersections between SES/Gender/Ethnicity are important

The Impact of Intake

'Natural justice demands that schools are held accountable only for those things they can influence (for good or ill) and not for all the existing differences between their intakes'

   (Nuttall 1990)

SER seeks to disentangle the impact of prior attainment and background characteristics from the impact of school and classes/teachers on students' progress/social or affective outcomes

'Effectiveness is not a neutral term. Defining the effectiveness of a particular school always requires choices among competing values … the criteria of effectiveness will be the subject of political debate' (Firestone, 1990)

Effectiveness is a *retrospective, relative concept* that is time and outcome specific

- **Effective in promoting which outcomes?**

  the *what* of effectiveness

- **Effective for which student groups eg gender/ethnic/SES?**

  the *who* of effectiveness

- **Effective over what time period?**

  the *when* of effectiveness

These questions provide a focus for school self evaluation & review and the development of improvement initiatives - they have important implications for the promotion of equity

Schools Matter Most for Disadvantaged Students

- **The size of school effects for black students were almost twice as large as for white students in the US**

- **Differences between public and private schools almost twice as large for low SES students as for middle class students, differences between schools for high SES students are small in US**

- **School effects vary for students by race and low prior attainment in England. School effects larger for initially low attaining and for black Caribbean students**

Schools matter most for underprivileged and/or initially low achieving students. Effective or ineffective schools are especially effective or ineffective for these students

After Scheerens & Bosker 1997

The Processes of Effective Schools

1. The processes of effective leadership
2. The processes of effective teaching
3. Developing & maintaining a pervasive focus on learning
4. Producing a positive school culture
5. Creating high (& appropriate expectations for all)
6. Emphasising student responsibilities & rights
7. Monitoring progress at all levels
8. Developing staff skills at the school site
9. Involving parents in productive & appropriate ways

After Teddlie & Reynolds 2000

The 'ineffective' school
(Reynolds 1995)

- **Non-rational approach to evidence**

- **fear of outsiders**

- **dread of change**

- **capacity for blaming external conditions**

- **set of internal cliques**

- **lack of competencies for improvement**

..may have inside itself multiple schools formed around cliques and friendship groups .. There will be none of the organisational, social, cultural and symbolic tightness of the effective school

Processes for School Improvement

- Clear leadership
- Developing a shared vision & goals
- Staff development & teacher learning
- Involving pupils, parents & community
- Using an evolutionary development planning process
- Redefining structures, frameworks, roles   & responsibilities
- Emphasis on teaching & learning
- Monitoring, problem-solving & evaluation
- Celebration of success
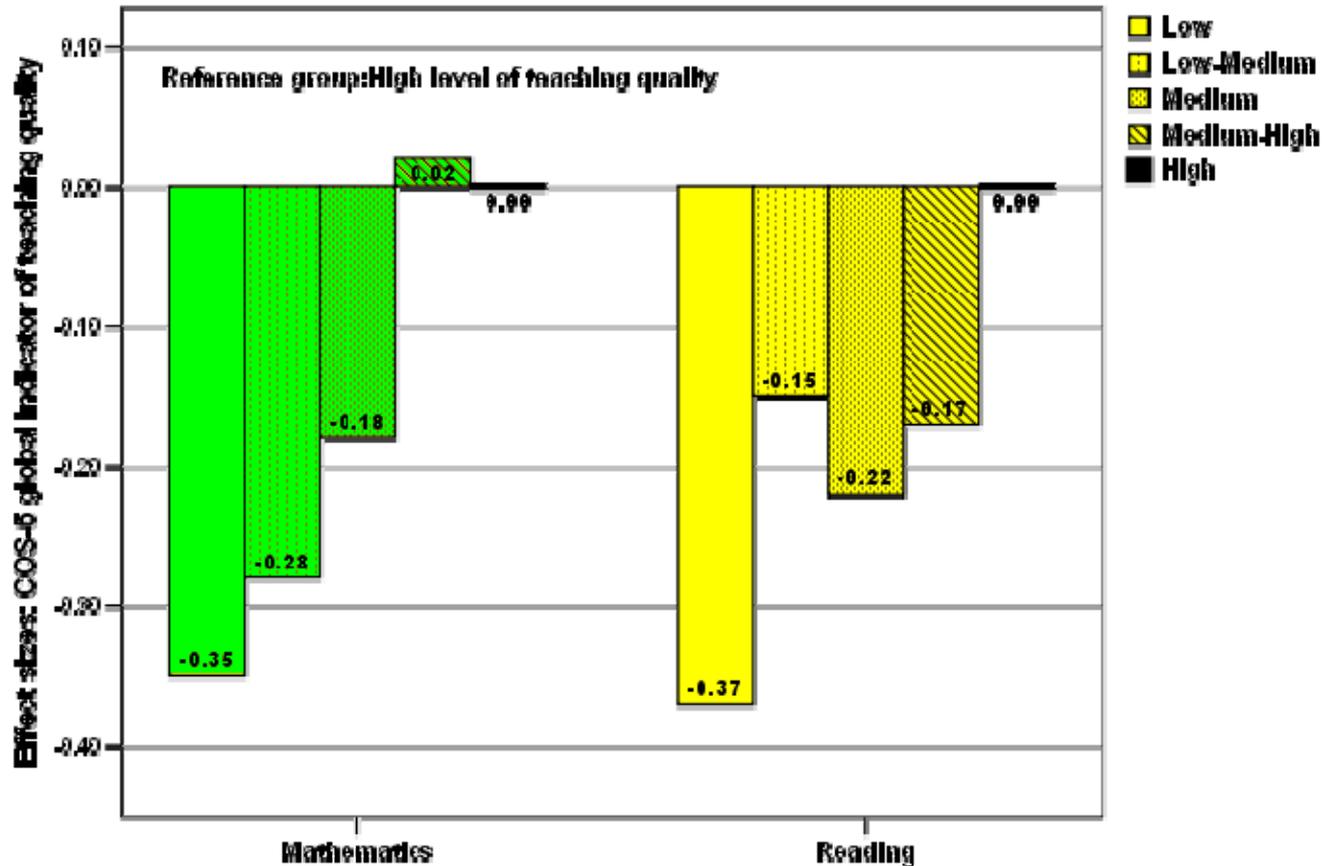- External support, networking & partnership

Several interesting & well tried models have been developed eg:

Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA)

High Reliability Schools

Success for All

What matters in the classroom:
Teaching quality

Overall, observed Y5 *Teaching quality* is a significant predictor of better cognitive progress from Year 1 to Year 5 in both Reading and Maths.

Improving City Schools: key features of teaching

- a high degree of consistency across the school

- high expectations of pupils, matched by well planned support to help them meet the challenges of the work

- skilful management of pupils in classrooms and effective use of time and resources

- motivating teaching methods & materials, planned with the improvement of basic skills in mind

Ofsted 2000

Quality matters: Ofsted inspection measures
School effectiveness and cognitive progress
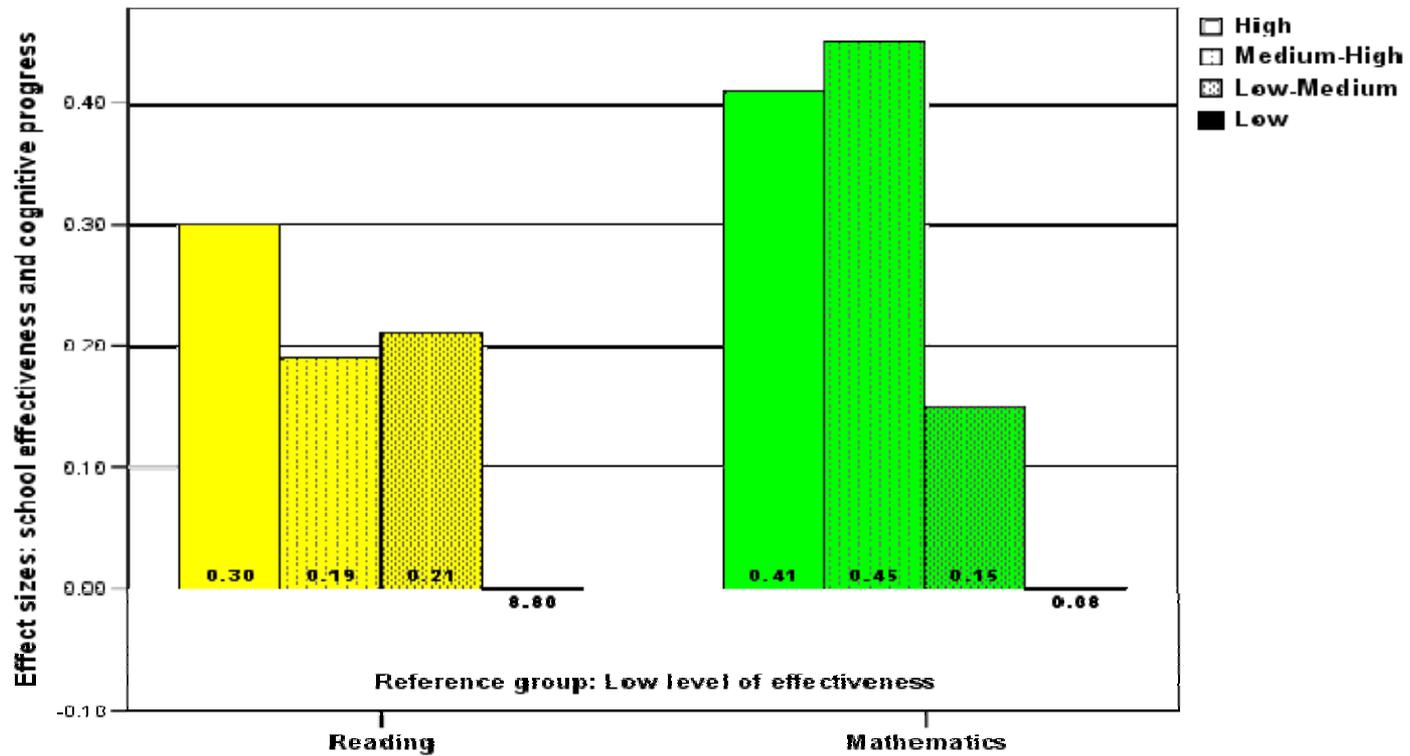
Attending a school judged by Ofsted as more effective made a difference to _Maths_ progress, _Reading_ and for _Self-regulation_. Other progress measures show effects that were in a similar direction but were not statistically significant.

Quality matters: Ofsted inspection measures
School improvement and social/behavioural development
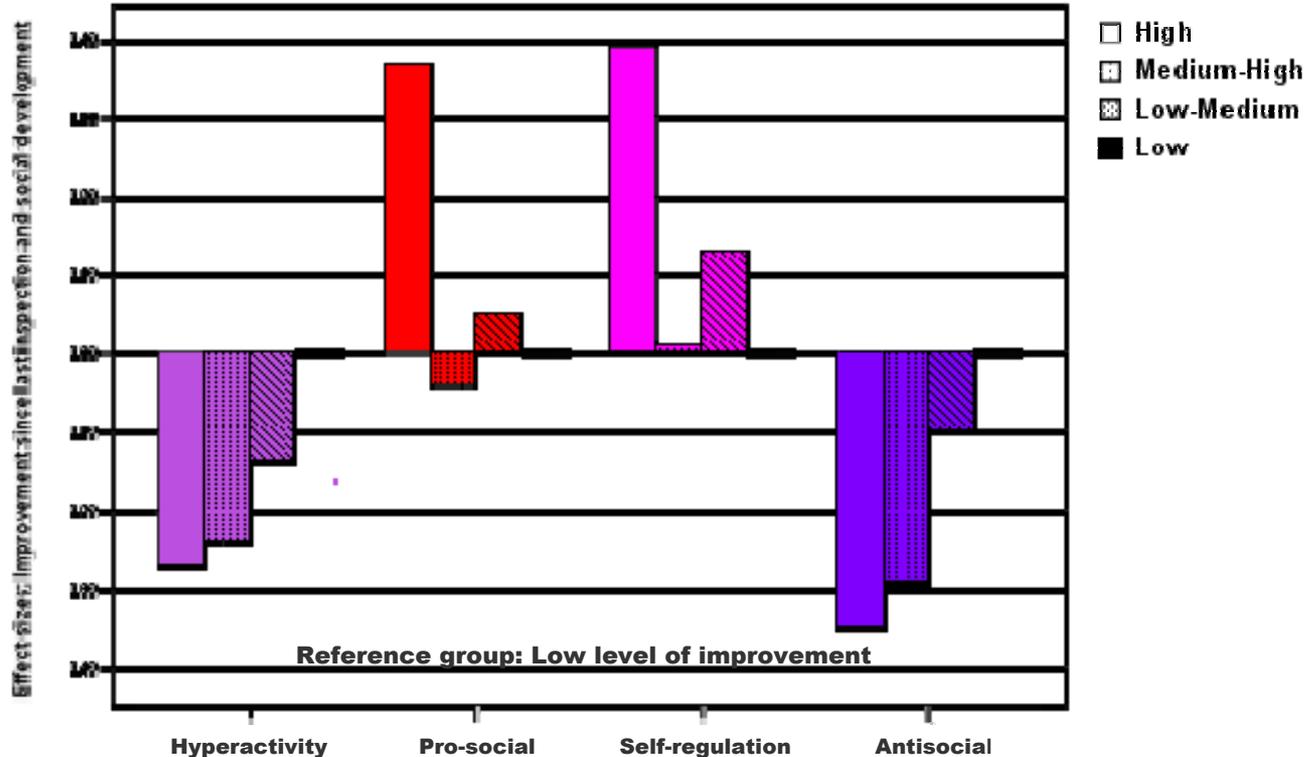
Schools Ofsted judged had shown most improvement since the last inspection predicted better progress for our sample in, _Self-regulation_, _Pro-social behaviour_ and improvements in terms of reduced _Anti-social behaviour_ and _Hyperactivity_ as well as better progress in Maths .

Improving Schools in Disadvantaged Settings

Focus on:

- Teaching & learning
- Enhancing leadership capacity
- Creating an information rich environment
- Creating a positive school culture
- Building a learning community
- Promoting continuous professional development
- Involving parents
- Engaging external support.

(Muijs et al 2004)

Improvement of Robert Clack: Case study

In 1996 one of 'worst' schools ever seen by inspectors

- Serious problems of low attainment & poor behaviour

- Staff termed the school a *'zoo'* where students *'could do what they wanted, many kids were running riot'* drug dealing in playground

- Weak staff morale, difficulties in recruitment & retention, falling pupil rolls & serious budget deficit

- Context highly disadvantaged community highest % council housing & one parent families lowest % adults with educational qualifications in country, high % low income families (FSM)

BUT sustained improvement 1996-2006

%5A*-C   1996 17%, 1998 23%, 2001 39%, 2004 58% 2006 79%

Current attainment above national average & no gender gap, performance – 'like with like' comparisons very high in comparison with similar schools

School now oversubscribed & highly regarded by local community, still serves highly disadvantaged intake & increased ethnic diversity

Robert Clack: Some explanations for success

- **Excellent leadership & support from governors and LEA**

- **A culture of collaboration, high expectations of teachers and pupils, care invested in staff development, respect for students' right to learn and teachers' right to teach**

  'we still have difficult pupils but we don't have classes out of control'

- **Creation of a relaxed, cooperative learning environment where learning enjoyed and teachers find professional satisfaction**

- **Emphasis on rewards and support, using data and target setting**

                                                                                    Haydn 2001

- **'The good quality of teaching has been responsible for the significant raising of standards since the last inspection'**
  The school adopted a standard lesson model the Robert Clack Good Lesson developed collaboratively by staff and used consistently

- **'Behaviour is good in classes, learners are attentive and work well together …. Behaviour problems are dealt with quickly, in fair, consistent and positive ways'**

                                                                    Ofsted Inspection 2004

Robert Clack: Transforming school culture

In some parts of the community there is a violent, aggressive, anti-social culture. Within the school we have created an alternative community in which achievement is 'cool' and caring for others is the normal expectation' **Assistant headteacher**

'We teach students the meaning of responsibility. We have a responsibility to them, to provide them with a high quality education and ensure they achieve their potential. They also have a responsibility to themselves and to those around them to ensure that as a community we respect and support each other' **Headteacher**

- **There is an emphasis on celebrating achievement and a whole school approach, including literacy support across the curriculum with provision of a very wide range of extra-curricular activities and emphasis on participation in sport.**

- **Looked after children, SEN, EAL and gifted & talented receive good support and make good progress**

- **Team work is a strength and morale is high**

- **Leadership outstanding and communication within school excellent**

Ofsted Inspection 2004

Schools that Make a Difference (1)
12 Successful Canadian Secondary Schools in Low-income settings

- The role of the secondary school is especially important for students from low income environments. Schools can reduce social inequalities by stressing clear expectations and supportive structures and services

- Need for schools to tackle areas over which they have most control (culture, leadership & classroom practices)

- The importance of the role and person of the principal is greater in schools with low-income environments

- Three defining elements of climate:security, examinations and personal relationships. In their general approach to teaching ad learning these schools appear to be traditional

- The elements of success in these schools do not seem to differ significantly from those found in the research literature. Successful low-income schools are simply successful schools. They are 'no excuses' schools which have accepted the responsibility to create high achievement for all students, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds

Henchey 2001

Schools that Make a Difference (2)
18 High Attainment Welsh Primary Schools in Disadvantaged Settings

Results pointed to features of school culture:

- Key role of headteachers who actively developed leadership capability throughout the school – leadership density & depth supported by team working & participation in decision making

- Important contribution by Governing bodies to support leadership

- Staff 'passionate' about their work, high levels of commitment & engagement

- Strong emphasis on parental participation to engender their engagement & commitment to work of the school

- 'Mindset' of school – empowered & proactive optimism, highly reflective approach, an 'accept & improve' outlook, very high aspirations, ideals & expectations, a willingness to praise, a caring attitude & pride in the school

James et al 2006

Education for social inclusion: perspectives from the Includ-Ed project

John Holford & Engel (2009) University of Nottingham

Case Studies of 3 Effective & Improved English Schools

- High proportions of ethnic minority students (above 80th percentile nationally)
- High proportions of EAL students
- In top 20% most deprived areas in the country (students eligible to receive free school meals higher than national average)
- High proportions of students with SEN
- Successful schools (high Contexual Value Added scores, academic attainment over time, good practice related to inclusion and community cohesion, Ofsted results)

Findings organised around three themes of effective educational practice:

- High expectations
- Structural issues around turning expectations into practice
- Inclusion as an ethos

High Expectations

View: *"we have high expectations for all students"*

- **Authentic belief in all student's ability to make academic progress,**

- **Encouraging students to continue studying,**

- **Providing opportunities for students to explore opportunities to continue studying or successfully enter labour market,**

- **Building student's own expectations; engaging and encouraging parents and families.**

- **Majority did continue studying (college/university)**

Expectations as a Practice

- Commitment to the individual (operational and strategic planning),
- Extension of learning time:
  - ➤ Staying in school after classes to receive **homework support**. **All day school** or afternoon clubs.
  - ➤ **Learning Mentor** (community member, parent, volunteer).
  - ➤ **Learning Buddies**, pairing an older child with a younger child.
- Strategic use of additional human resources (staff collaboration, use of volunteers, placement of most qualified staff, including upper management)

Expectations as a Practice, cont.

- Personal interviews with senior management staff,
- Extensive individual consultation for students with SEN,
- Regular career advice provided and assistance with applications,
- University students and former students as role models,
- Ensuring that no course of study is a dead-end.

Inclusion as an ethos

- Inclusion more than singular or set of collective practices;
- Schools and programmes were identified as having an 'inclusive spirit', an 'ethos of inclusion', and a 'positive atmosphere';
- Philosophy and ethos matched by policy and practice;
- Diversity not regarded in subtractive manner, reflected in students' acceptance of difference;
- 'Barrier Free' school setting.

Leadership matters: Results from the Leadership & Pupil Outcomes Project

Poor leadership is a well documented feature of ineffective schools in research and inspection evidence

7 *Strong Claims* – Review by Leithwood et al 2006

- School leadership second only to classroom teaching as an influence on student learning

- Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices

- Ways leaders deploy these are responsive to school context

- School leaders improve teaching & learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions

Studies of highly improved and effective schools indicate that staff perceive leadership of the head teacher to be a crucial factor in their success (Sammons, Gu & Mehta, 2008; Day et al 2009)

The Role of the Headteacher

The Primacy of the Head teacher
Head teachers are perceived as the main source of leadership by school key staff. Their leadership practice shapes the internal processes and pedagogic practices that foster improvement in school and classroom conditions and better pupil outcomes, especially for schools in challenging circumstances.

Leadership Qualities and Values
Head teachers are adaptable in their leadership and management strategies, within a core values framework governed by principles of care, equity and performance.

Expectations and Outcomes
Head teachers' expectations and aspirations emanated from a view of pupil achievement which incorporated improved behaviour, academic, personal and social and affective dimensions.

The Role of the Headteacher (cont.)
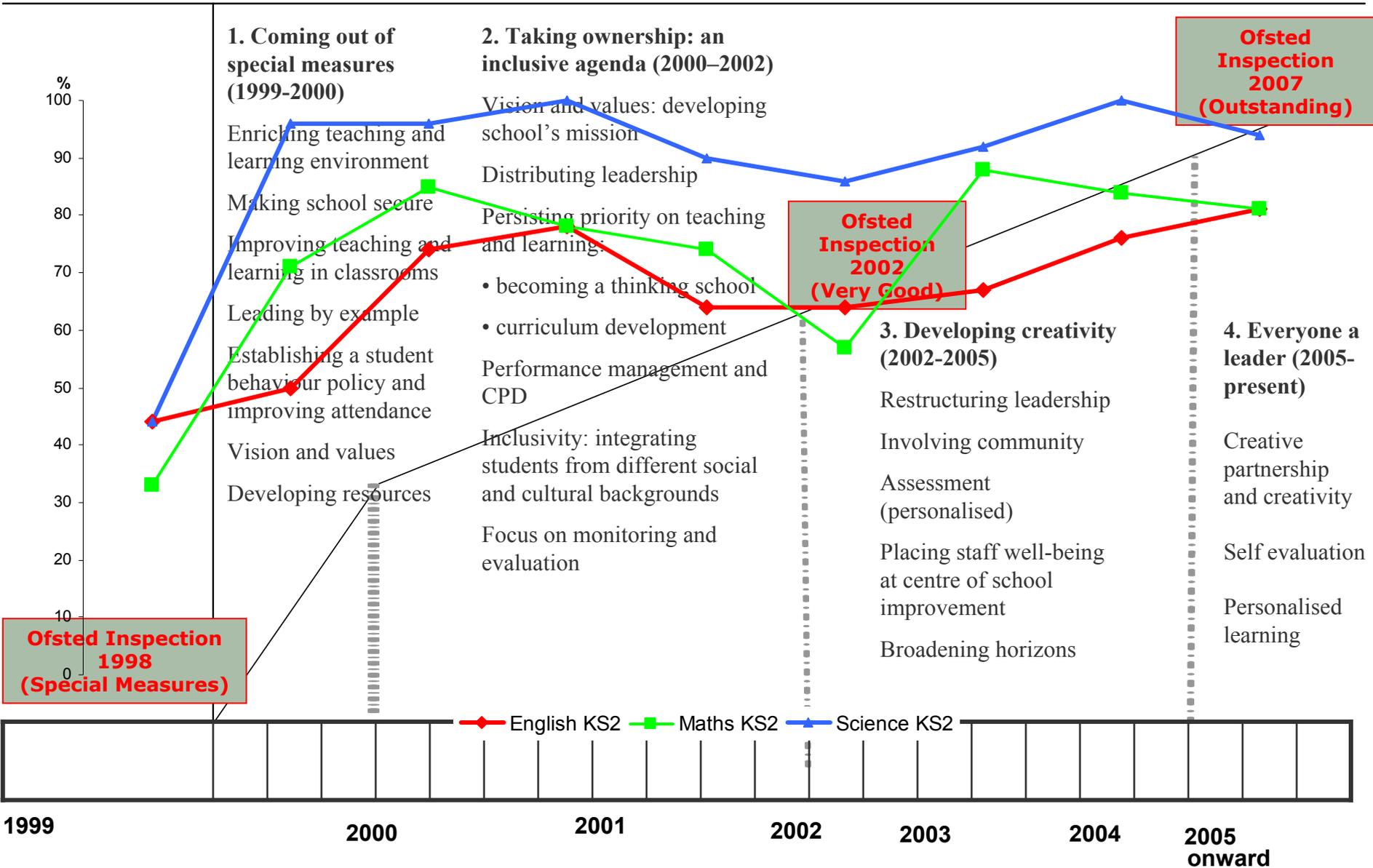
Leadership and Strategic Change
Head teachers used a range of strategies in building the effectiveness capacity of the school and promoting improvement.
e.g. addressing vision, raising expectations, staff development, distributing leadership, restructuring, enhancing pedagogy & promoting a positive, achievement focused culture.

Leadership Differences by Improvement Groupings
Schools which improved from a low point (i.e. from low to moderate/high) have made the most changes and laid more emphasis on raising expectations, use of data, assessment and staff development.

A Line of Success & changes in KS2 national assessment results

1. Coming out of special measures (1999-2000)

Enriching teaching and learning environment

Making school secure

Improving teaching and learning in classrooms

Leading by example

Establishing a student behaviour policy and improving attendance

Vision and values

Developing resources

2. Taking ownership: an inclusive agenda (2000–2002)

Vision and values: developing school's mission

Distributing leadership

Persisting priority on teaching and learning:

• becoming a thinking school

• curriculum development

Performance management and CPD

Inclusivity: integrating students from different social and cultural backgrounds

Focus on monitoring and evaluation

3. Developing creativity (2002-2005)

Restructuring leadership

Involving community

Assessment (personalised)

Placing staff well-being at centre of school improvement

Broadening horizons

4. Everyone a leader (2005-present)

Creative partnership and creativity

Self evaluation

Personalised learning

Ofsted Inspection 2007 (Outstanding)

Ofsted Inspection 2002 (Very Good)

Ofsted Inspection 1998 (Special Measures)

%
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0

English KS2   Maths KS2   Science KS2

1999   2000   2001   2002   2003   2004   2005 onward
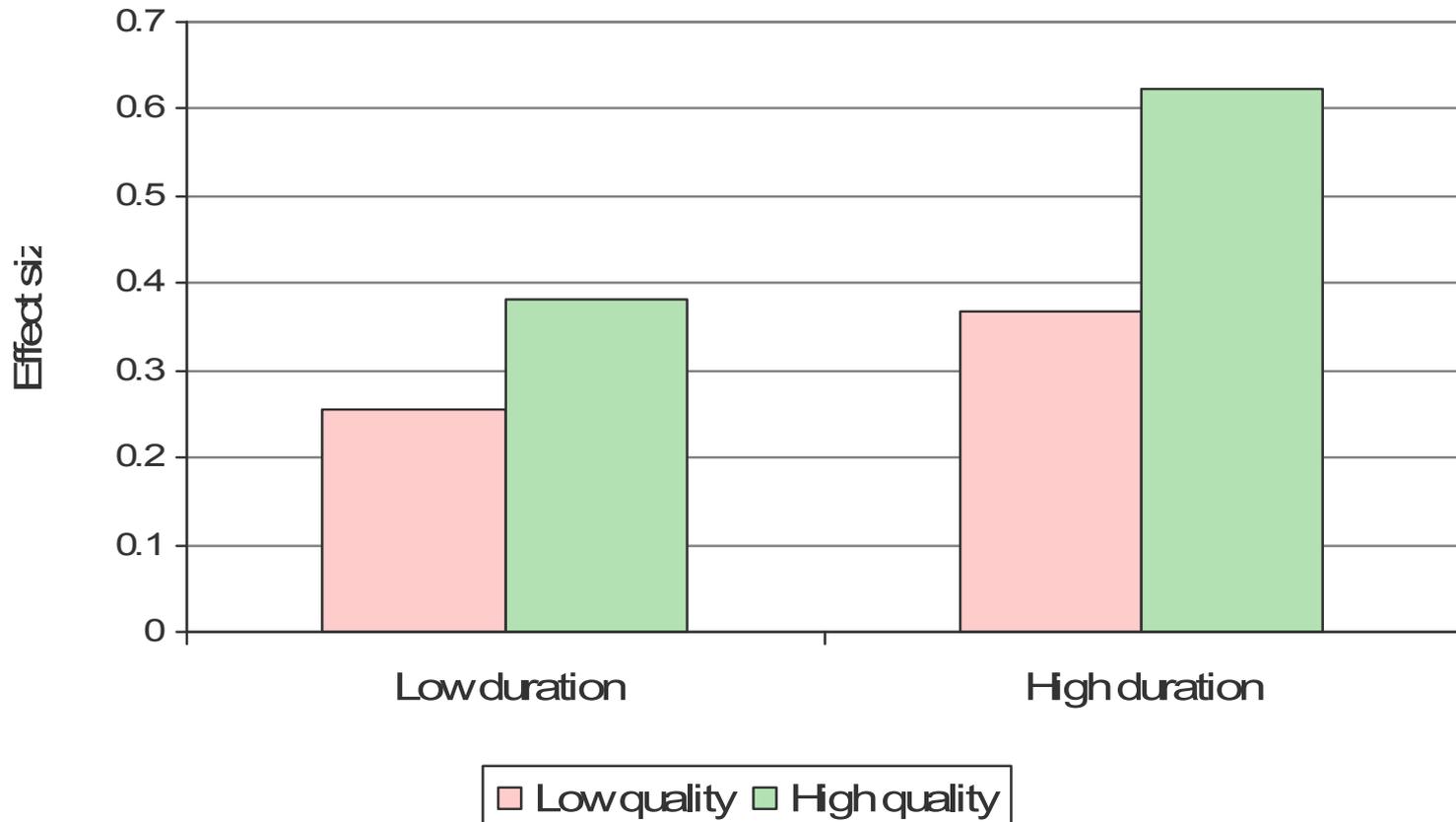
Integrating the Quantitative & Qualitative Evidence
Strategies for improving student learning and achievement
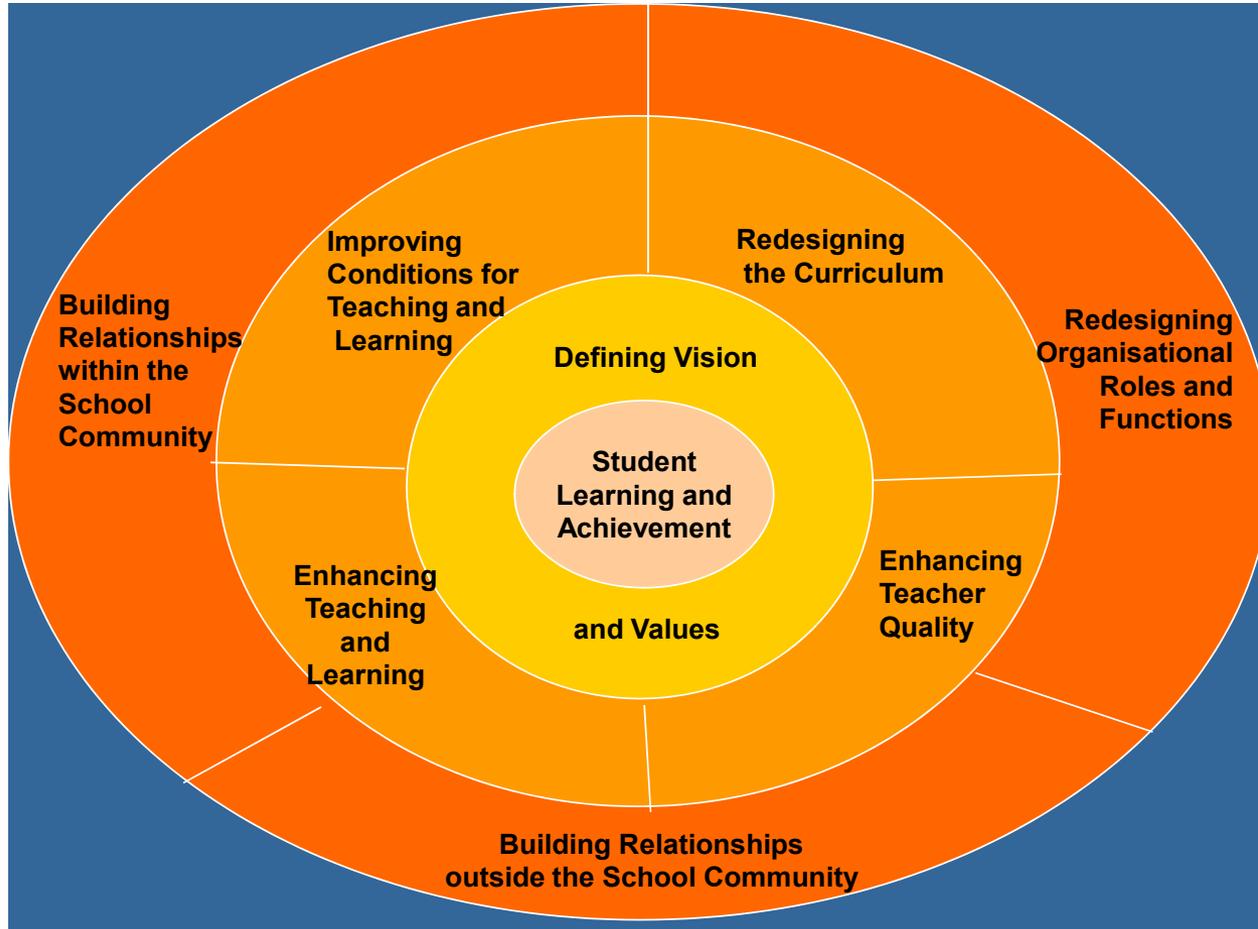
Pre School Matters Too

Effect of quality and duration of pre-school (v none) on pre-reading at school entry EPPE research (Sylva et al 2004)

Pre-reading at school entry
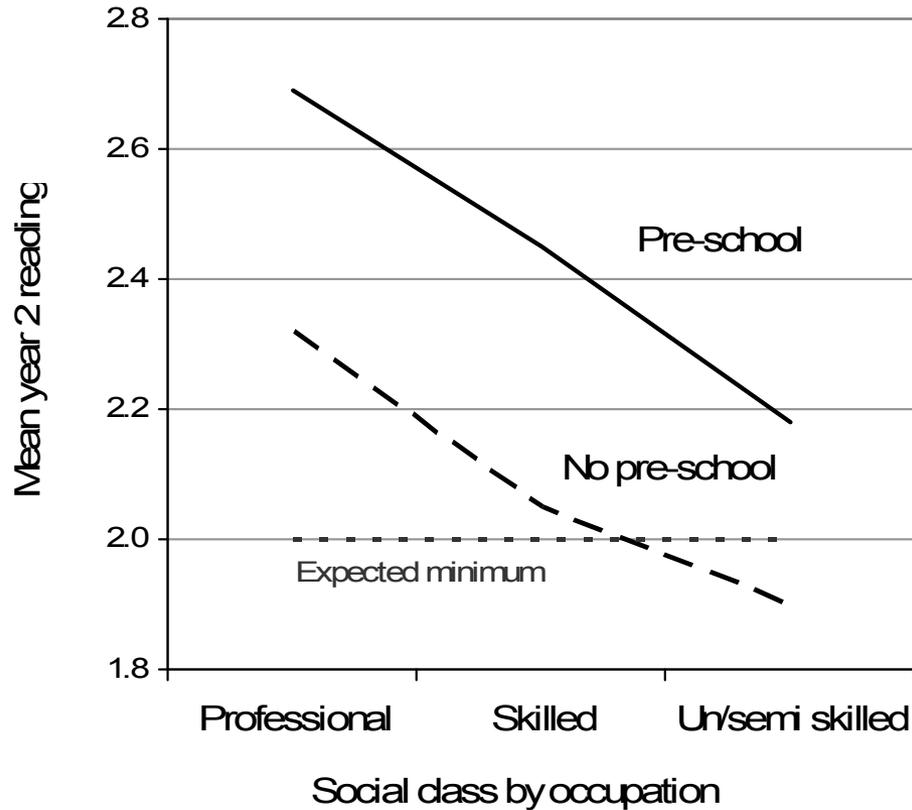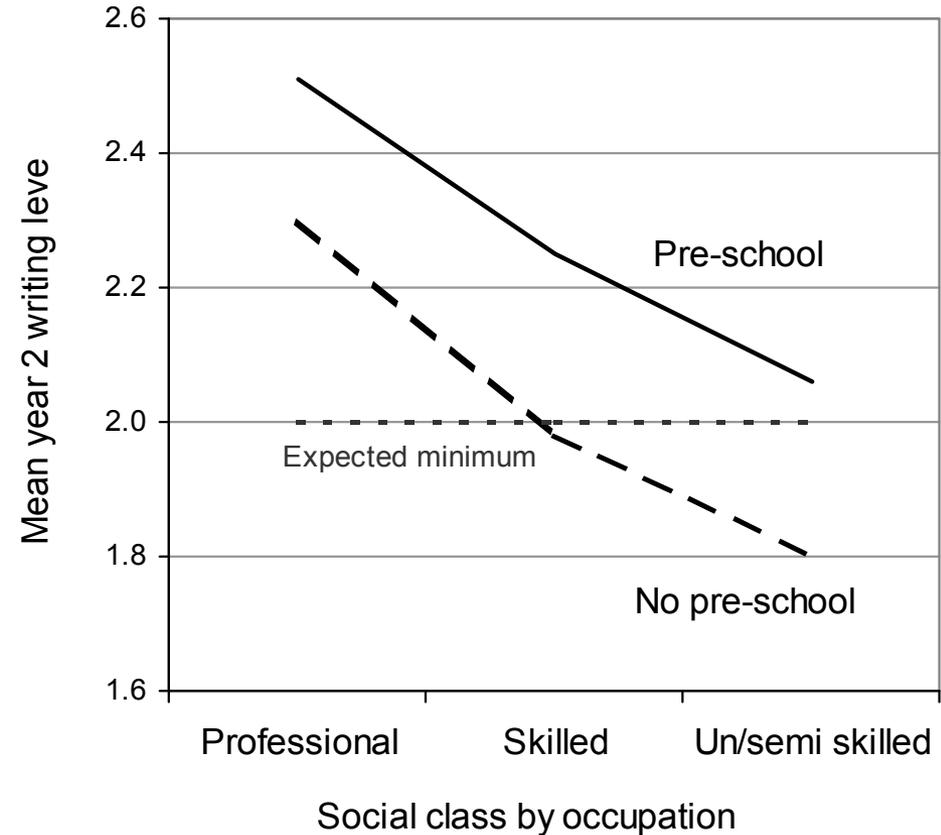
Pre-school Improves Outcomes for Low SES Groups
Contribution of Social class & pre-school to literacy attainment (age 7)
EPPE Research

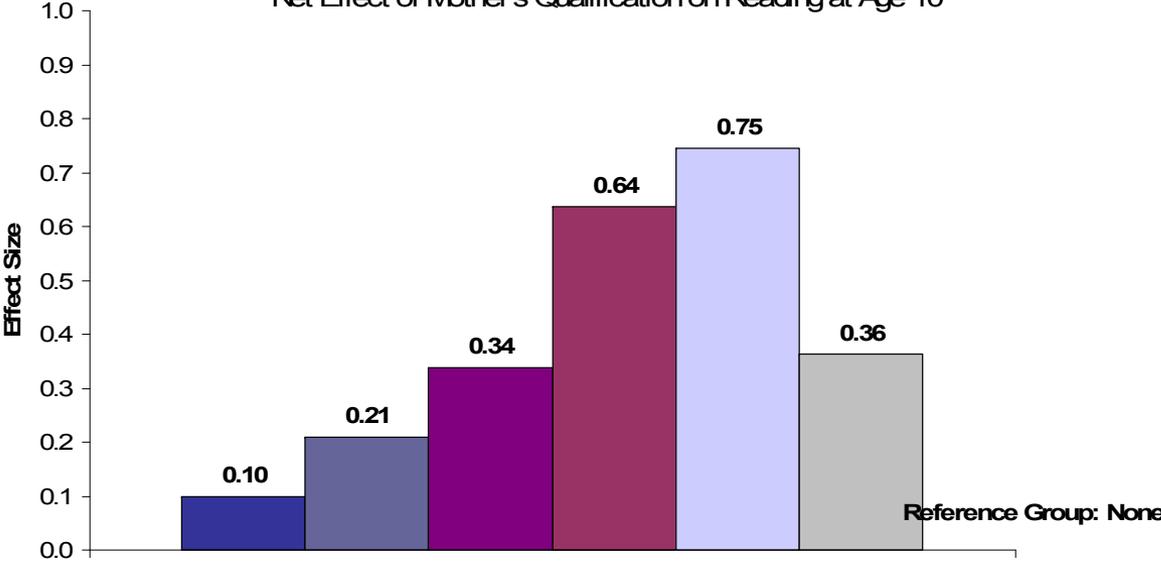**READING at key stage 1, social class and pre-school experience**

Mean year 2 reading (y-axis: 1.8 to 2.8)

Pre-school

No pre-school

Expected minimum

Social class by occupation (Professional, Skilled, Un/semi skilled)

WRITING at key stage 1, social class and pre-school experience

Mean year 2 writing leve (y-axis: 1.6 to 2.6)

Pre-school

Expected minimum

No pre-school

Social class by occupation (Professional, Skilled, Un/semi skilled)

Net Effect of Mother's Qualification on Reading at Age 10

Mother's Qualification

Reference Group: None

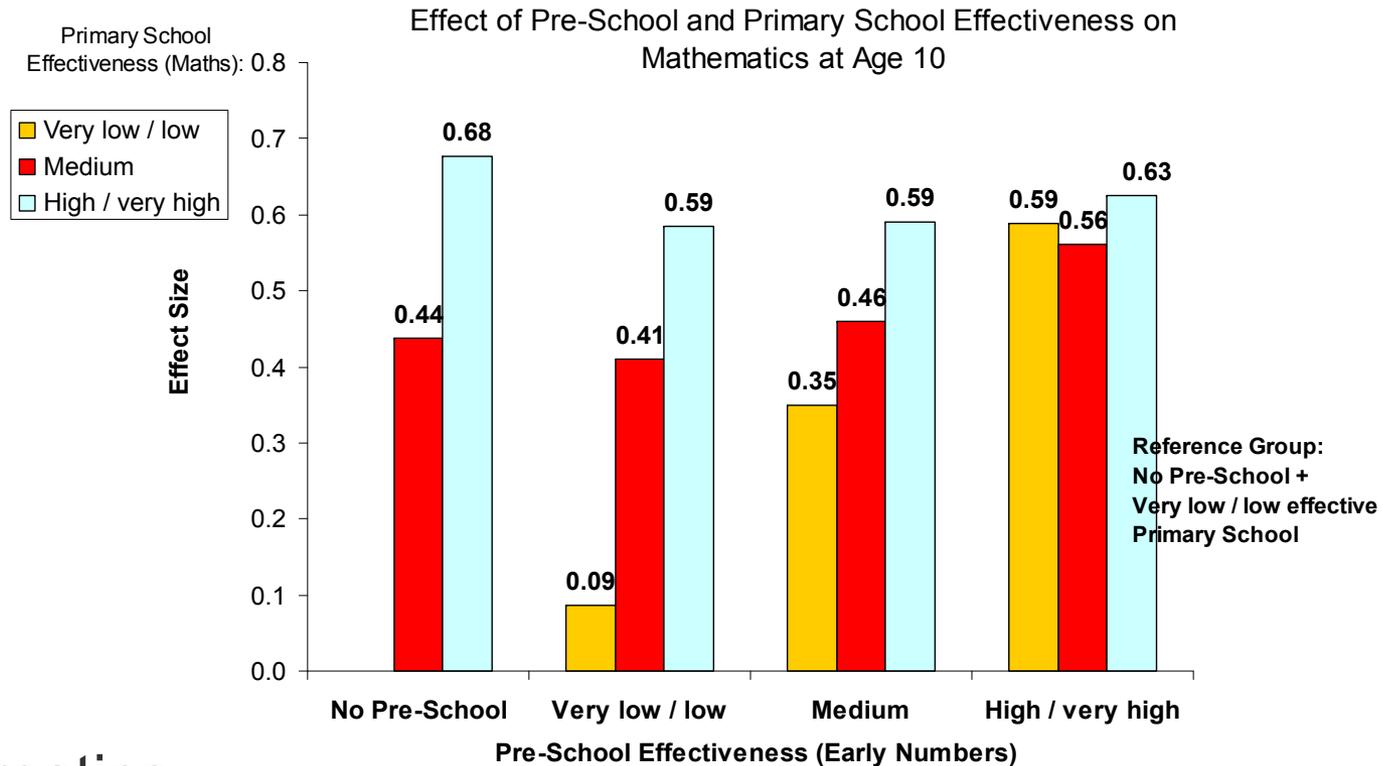Legend: Vocational · 16 Academic · 18 Academic · Degree or equivalent · Higher degree · Other Professional

Net Effect of Early Home-Learning Environment on Reading at Age 10

HLE (Early Years)

Reference Group: 0-13

HLE Index (Pre-School)
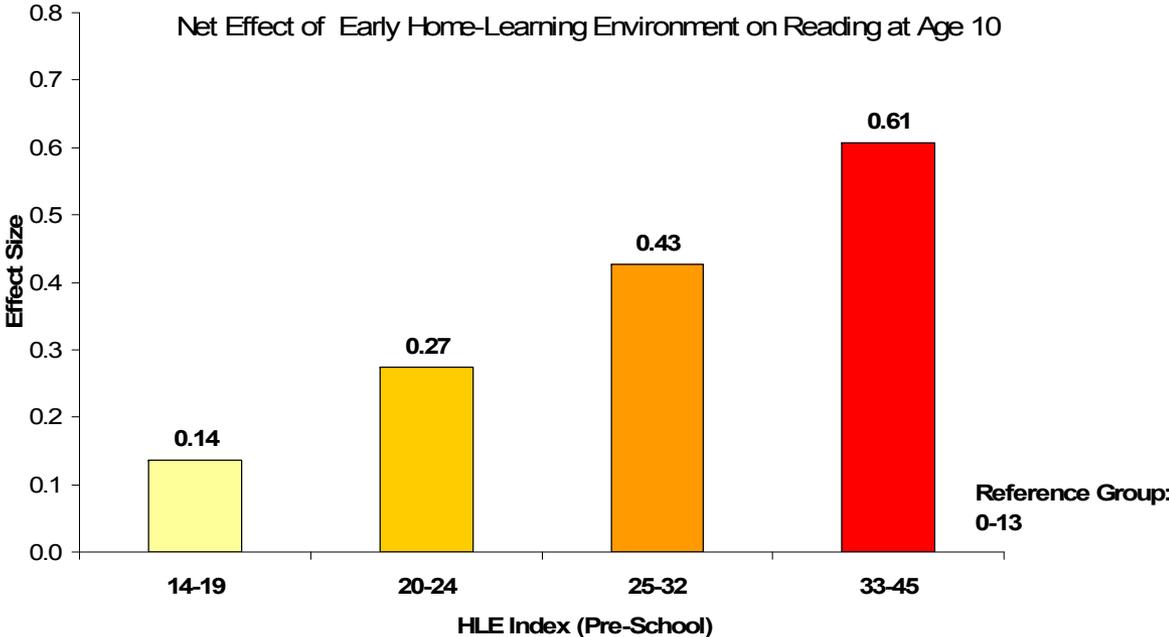
The Combined Impact of Pre- and Primary School Effectiveness on Maths Attainment Age 10

Primary School Effectiveness (Maths):

Effect of Pre-School and Primary School Effectiveness on Mathematics at Age 10

Legend:
- Very low / low
- Medium
- High / very high

Reference Group: No Pre-School + Very low / low effective Primary School

Y-axis: Effect Size

X-axis: Pre-School Effectiveness (Early Numbers)

No Pre-School: Medium 0.44, High/very high 0.68
Very low / low: Very low/low 0.09, Medium 0.41, High/very high 0.59
Medium: Very low/low 0.35, Medium 0.46, High/very high 0.59
High / very high: Very low/low 0.59, Medium 0.56, High/very high 0.63

Mathematics

Reference Group: No Pre-School and Very low / low Primary School Effectiveness

Significance of School Effects

Although the differences in scholastic attainment achieved by the same student in contrasting schools is unlikely to be great, in many instances it represents the difference between success and failure and operates as a facilitating or inhibiting factor in higher education

When coupled with the promotion of other pro-social attitudes and behaviours, and the inculcation of a positive self-image,the potential of the school to improve the life chances of students is considerable

Mortimore 1998

Some messages from research & evaluation

- **Pre-school provides children with a better start to school and is particularly important in improving attainment for low SES pupils**

- **For disadvantaged groups the academic effectiveness of the school attended is particularly important, school effects are larger for low SES/low income & minority students**

- **SER provides an important evidence-base on the correlates of effective schools and teachers and has stimulated school improvement initiatives at national and local level.**

- **Schools serving disadvantaged groups face additional challenges and require additional support for improvement, leadership capacity and a focus on the core purposes of teaching and learning and creating a safe, supportive orderly school climate with high expectations are essential features**

- **For the most vulnerable groups of pupils intensive, high quality, structured and targetted interventions are still needed at an early stage eg Reading Recovery**

Impact of Standards-based Policies

- A 'cocktail effect' of national curriculum, national assessment, financial devolution, inspection, increased professional development & changes to teacher education, later supported by national strategies and development of curriculum and assessment resources and materials coupled with major extra investment in education has promoted substantial school improvement and raised attainment levels in England over the last 15 years (Sammons et al 2004, Sammons, 2008)

- Inspection provides an important source of independent evidence to monitor standards, investigate specific issues and evaluate progress of policy initiatives

- Inspection has been a catalyst for improvement, especially of weaker schools and this has benefited disadvantaged pupils especially, because they are over represented in such schools (Matthews & Sammons 2004)

- The identification and support of failing/poorly performing schools has had considerable success in England, particularly since 1997

- The DIPF comparative research on *Features of Successful School Systems* (Dobert & Sroka 2004) studying 6 countries with high results in PISA 2000 draws attention to the benefits of pre-set educational standards (partly linked to a national curriculum) increased responsibility for schools combined with regular evaluations or centrally determined tests. These features characterise 'standards based reforms'

The English School Improvement Reform Model
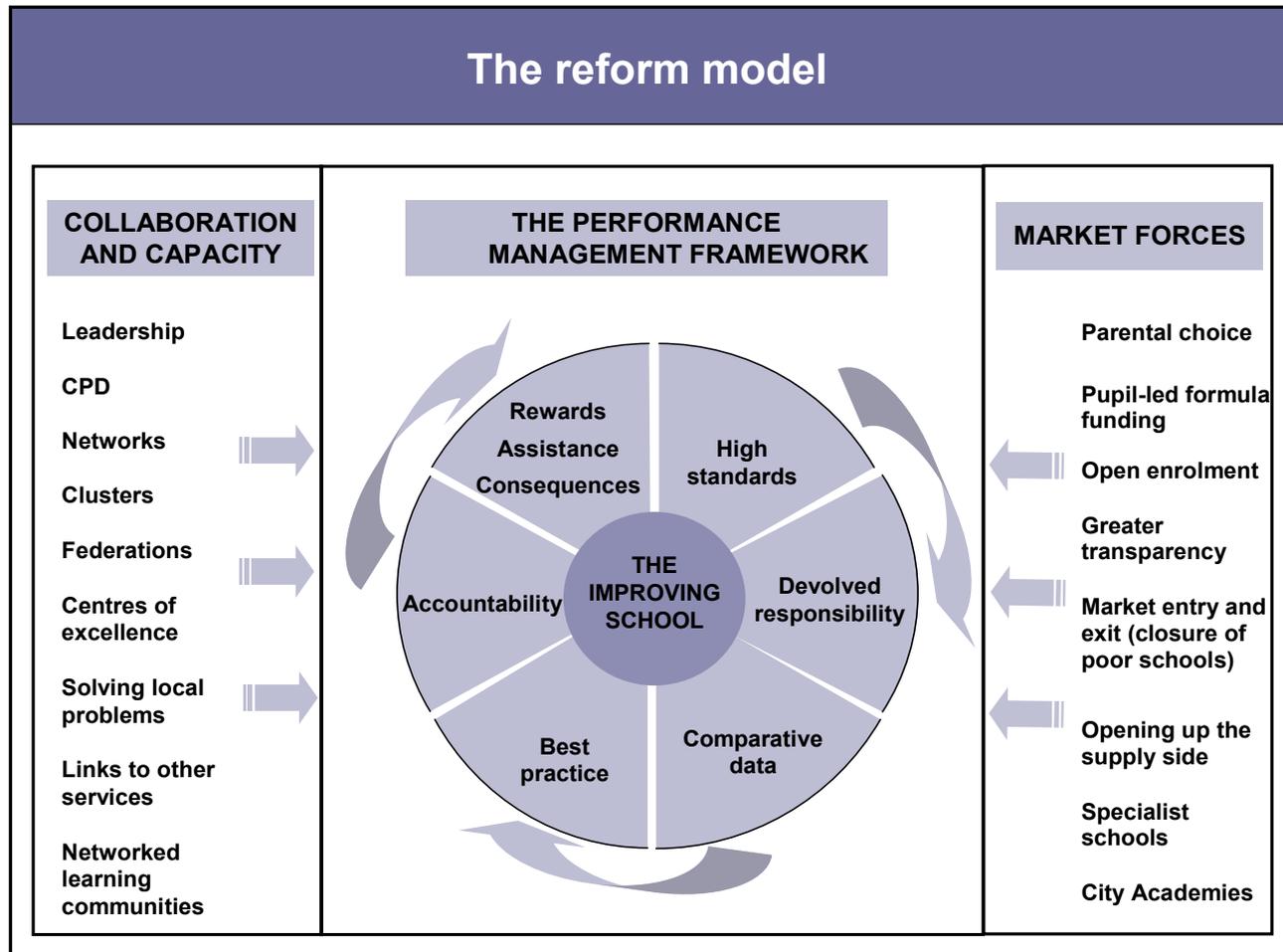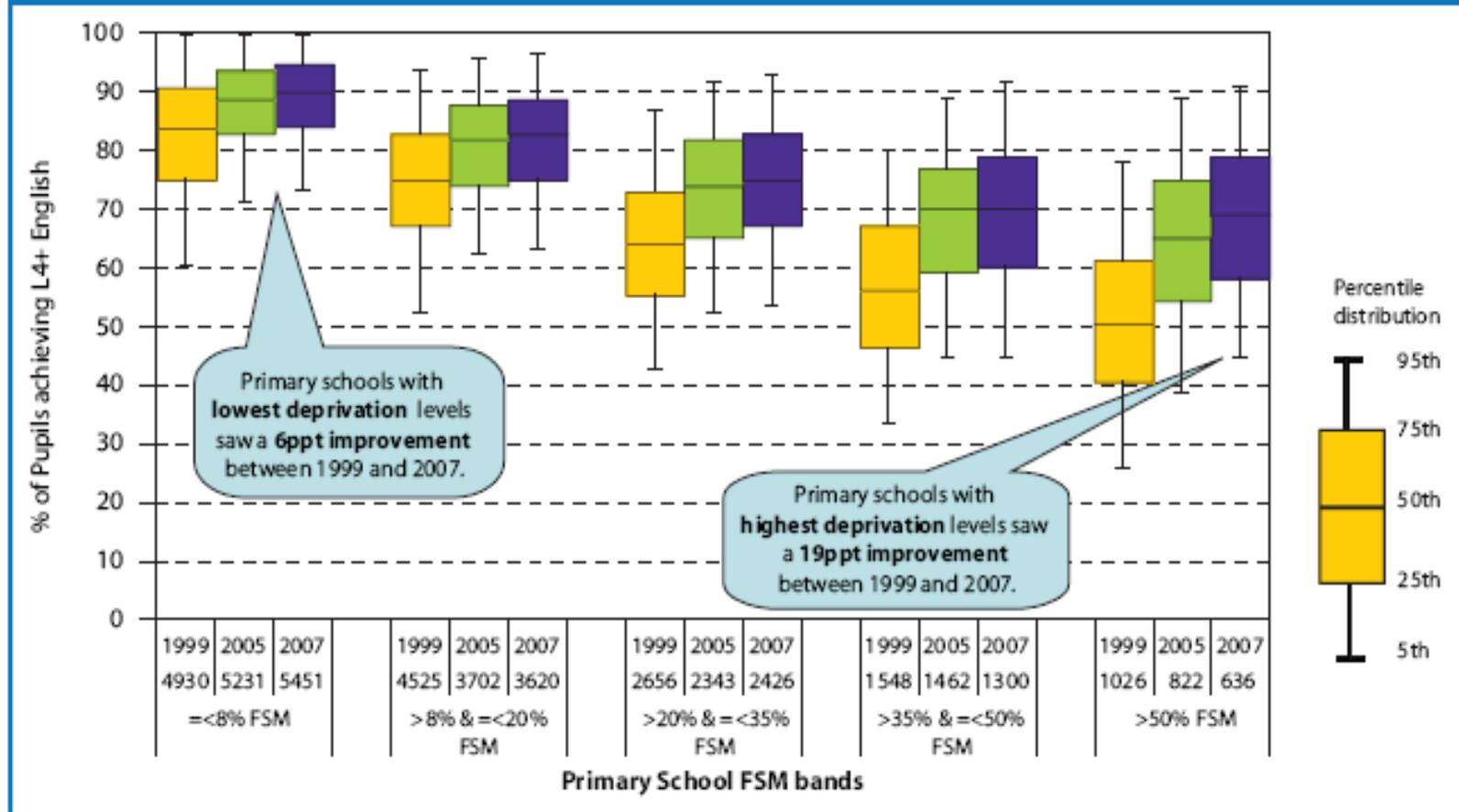# High Challenge High Support 1997 onwards
(After Barber 2005)

Chart 4 – Primary schools which serve more deprived pupils have narrowed the attainment gap with schools serving more affluent pupils

Breaking the Link Between Disadvantage and Low Attainment Everyone's Business DCSF 2009

Implications for Policy & Practice

- Education reform requires extra resources linked to clear plans for improvement based on best available evidence (research & inspection) & a focus on enhancing student learning & outcomes

- Match accountability pressure by greater support for schools (professional, & in curriculum, financial and material resources)

- Recognise :
  - that schools serving disadvantaged groups need extra support to retain & attract good teachers and leaders
  - the importance of early intervention and targetted support for individual children/students
  - the achievements made in raising standards especially for vulnerable groups & by schools in challenging contexts

- Make the recruitment of disadvantaged students financially attractive to schools to encourage more balanced intakes

- Ensure that planning for improvement becomes the norm in all schools

- Monitor equity in outcomes and focus on reducing the achievement gap, giving greater attention to early intervention eg Narrowing the Gaps

- Celebrate, study and spread successful practice & promote professional development