

The attainment of children eligible for free school meals

February 2014

The big picture

- Slightly more 5 year olds in Hampshire who are eligible for free school meals achieve a good level of development than in England as a whole – and the gap between them and their more advantaged peers is smaller than in England as a whole
- The same percentage of 11 year olds in Hampshire who are eligible for free school meals attain the expected standard at the age of 11 as in England as a whole. The gap between their attainment and those of the rest is slightly wider than the national average but that gap has narrowed in each of the last three years.
- The attainment of 16 year olds in Hampshire who are eligible for free school meals lags behind the national average and the gap between them and the rest of 16 year olds is much, much, larger - unacceptably larger.

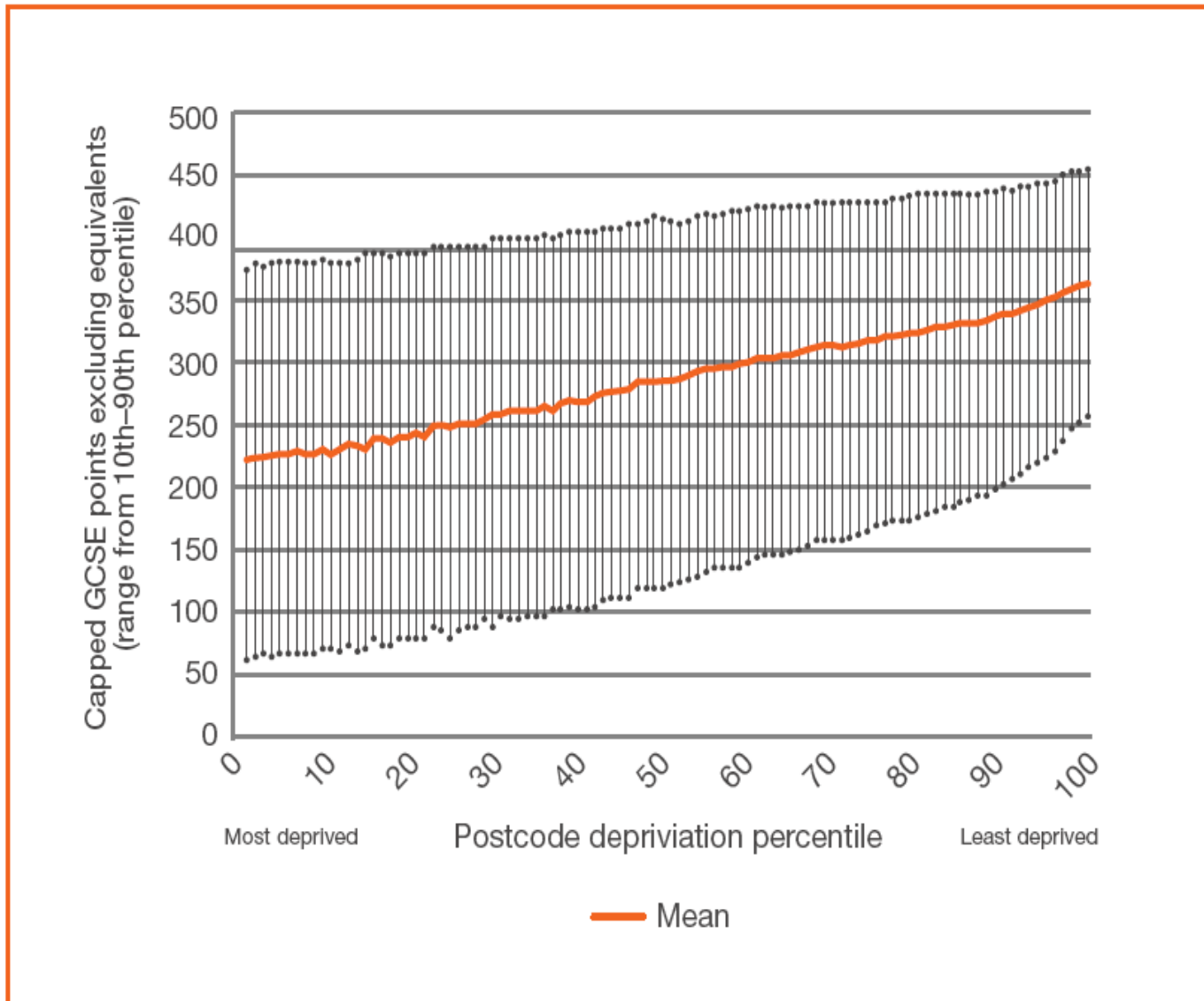


The detail in secondary schools

- There is a very large difference between local authorities in terms of 'the gap'.
- Authorities in the south east of the country have the largest gaps.
- Hampshire is 135th out of 150 local authorities, ranked by the size of the gap. Authorities like Hampshire – large, shire and relatively affluent, struggle most. The gap in London is under 20%, 26% in Southampton; 32% in Surrey and 35% in Hampshire.
- It is not possible to discern any effect from the 'status' of a school on the attainment of 16 year olds eligible for free school meals in Hampshire.

Figure A1.6

Variation in pupil performance at GCSE, by postcode deprivation (capped GCSE points excluding equivalents)



The relationship between the percentage of FSM students in secondary school and their attainment



Percentage of Key Stage 4 cohort eligible for FSM



Our data show that it doesn't matter if you go to school in Britain, Finland, Japan, or anywhere else. Students from a privileged background do well everywhere. What really distinguishes education systems is their capacity to deploy resources where they make most difference. Your effect as a teacher is a lot greater on students who are not privileged than on those who have lots of educational resources.

OECD

What did we find in Hampshire secondary schools in the spring and summer of 2013?

1. The profile of students on free school meals is now very high.

Previously, in most schools, these students were lost in the overall cohort. Their progress was everyone's business but no one chased it down. This is changing quickly. The best schools get this.

2. Students on free school meals have unique combinations of barriers that limit their progress.....many schools do not know students well enough and are too slow to address the barriers in personalised improvement plans.

The understanding of how to identify and meet needs has to be improved. The best schools get this.

3. Individual teachers are not at the heart of schools' efforts to make sure that students on free school meals achieve.

The first action is often to reach for an intervention rather than to consider the quality of teaching overall – and good quality first teaching is often not the norm in lower attaining sets.

4. Schools are not always sure what is, and what is not, working for this specific group of students. Even where self evaluation is very strong at the level of the whole school and a wide range of methods is used to gather intelligence, the impact of the school's work on the attainment of students on free school meals has usually not been measured.

Schools need to sharpen their strategies for evaluating their impact on the progress of students with free school meals. Even the best schools find this hard.

5. The expected impact of interventions for students on free school meals is usually not ambitious enough. In some schools it often seems enough to be 'doing something'.

The assessment of impact needs to be much earlier than is the case in most schools to allow for the revision of plans or for abandoning them.

Impact has to be judged on the degree of **accelerated** progress that has been made. Few Hampshire schools get this yet.

- 6 Students will not do well unless they want to.
Students will not do well unless they believe they can.

This may be commonly understood but it is not always acted upon by teachers. The school's culture and its interventions rarely set out to build ownership, belief in success, resilience and perseverance – the things that some students on free school meals need most.

7. The attendance of students on free school meals in Hampshire secondary schools is four times worse than that of the general population. 1 in 12 days are missed.

Improving attendance has to be pursued with all means at a school's disposal.

“These children lack more than money; they lack parents who take responsibility for seeing them raised well. It is this poverty of accountability which costs them. These children suffer because they are not given clear rules or boundaries and have few secure or safe attachments at home.”

My last school succeeded because it took on the mantle of parenthood for our most vulnerable children. We were also tough with those parents who were unwilling to support us”.

Michael Wilshaw, October 15 2013

8. Many schools are now offering a different curriculum to year 7 students who are not 'secondary ready'. Many of these students are on free school meals.

All work, throughout the school, to match curriculum to student need is to be applauded. It is to be celebrated, with students and parents alike, not hidden away as though the school was ashamed of it.

9. Expectations of students on free school meals are not, generally, high enough. If progress is not accelerated in years 7 and 8 it's usually all too late by year 9 even if 'expected' progress is made in Key Stage 3. **Too many schools still allow what has been attained in the past to dictate what will be attained in the future** and too many only begin meaningful target setting in year 9.

Schools need to work backwards from success at GCSE and plan each student's journey to that success from when they enter the school. More schools are talking of success for all – and meaning it. More schools are talking about 4 levels of progress – not 3 - for some students and working to achieve that.

Why should we have grounds for optimism?

- Changes of focus in Ofsted inspections – and in the criteria for becoming outstanding
- In the national spotlight
- More money : £935 for secondary students from 2014: £50m nationally for summer schools for year 7 students who need to ‘catch up’ and an additional £500 per year 7 student who is below expected standards in reading and/or maths
- We know what to do and now secondary headteachers have several good reasons to listen. They know it’s no longer enough to be a 65% school
- The Local Authority is now behaving in some respects like an academy sponsoring trust – sharpening accountabilities and offering solutions.

The impact of Local Authority school improvement work on the attainment of primary aged children on free school meals.

	All % L4+ reading, writing and maths	No FSM % L4+ reading, writing and maths	FSM % L4+ reading, writing and maths
43 schools	76.7	79.7	66.4
138 schools	78.0	82.7	57.8

The effect of various strategies: Sutton Trust Research

Feedback	£££££	★★★★☆	+8 months	Sports participation	£££££	★★★★☆	+2 months
Meta-cognition and self-regulation	£££££	★★★★☆	+8 months	Arts participation	£££££	★★★★☆	+2 months
Peer tutoring	£££££	★★★★☆	+6 months	Extended school time	£££££	★★★☆☆	+2 months
Early years intervention	£££££	★★★★☆	+6 months	Individualised instruction	£££££	★★★★☆	+2 months
One to one tuition	£££££	★★★★☆	+5 months	After school programmes	£££££	★★★☆☆	+2 months
Homework (Secondary)	£££££	★★★★☆	+5 months	Learning styles	£££££	★★★★☆	+2 months
Collaborative learning	£££££	★★★★☆	+5 months	Mentoring	£££££	★★★★☆	+1 month
Mastery learning	£££££	★★★★☆	+5 months	Homework (Primary)	£££££	★★★★☆	+1 month
Phonics	£££££	★★★★☆	+4 months	Teaching assistants	£££££	★★★☆☆	0 months
Small group tuition	£££££	★★★☆☆	+4 months	Performance pay	£££££	★★★★☆	0 months
Behaviour interventions	£££££	★★★★☆	+4 months	Aspiration interventions	£££££	★★★★☆	0 months
Digital technology	£££££	★★★★☆	+4 months	Block scheduling	£££££	★★★☆☆	0 months
Social and emotional learning	£££££	★★★★☆	+4 months	School uniform	£££££	★★★★☆	0 months
Parental involvement	£££££	★★★★☆	+3 months	Physical environment	£££££	★★★★☆	0 months
Reducing class size	£££££	★★★★☆	+3 months	Ability grouping	£££££	★★★★☆	-1 month
Summer schools	£££££	★★★☆☆	+3 months	Repeating a year	£££££	★★★★☆	-4 months
Outdoor adventure learning	£££££	★★★☆☆	+3 months				

