[OAT]

Ormiston Academies Trust

ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER

Ormiston Academies Trust

Strategy 2019–2023

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Introduction

In January 2023 more than 30,000 OAT pupils will be in the middle of the academic year. Some will be starting their second term in reception. Some will be looking towards the start of secondary school. Others will be nearing GCSEs or finishing sixth form and thinking of their next step.

This strategy is for them. Without pupils, there are no schools, no teachers, no support staff, no multi-academy trusts. The work of everyone within Ormiston Academies Trust is defined by the children that we serve. Their future is our purpose.

As it stands today in January 2019, we do not know what that future will hold. Our schools serve communities where families and businesses are not always rewarded for the hard work that they do. Many of the things that can make life difficult we cannot change, whether this is on the Isle of Wight or in Halton, Stoke, Derby, the West Midlands, Grimsby, Ipswich, Norwich or the Eastern and Southern coast.

However, at its very heart education is about making the future different from the past. While we cannot know the future, we are fundamentally full of hope. In the face of uncertainty, we can give our pupils the greatest armament our species has ever created: deep and lasting knowledge and skill.

We are lucky that we are building this commitment on the shoulders of our 5,000 staff. Each and every one has chosen to work where there can be a range of educational challenges. No one should question the dedication and moral purpose of our people. This strategy is about harnessing that broad passion and making it razor sharp. We are grateful that so many members of our staff and governors took the time to contribute to shaping this strategy.

This strategy is our promise to those children of 2023. It is our promise that we will pull together to use our combined expertise and resources to solve problems that haven't been solved before. We will take hard decisions and we will not accept the status quo.

We must succeed, because these are not just other people's children. They are also our children. Not even one should be allowed to fail while there is more we could have done to change their story.
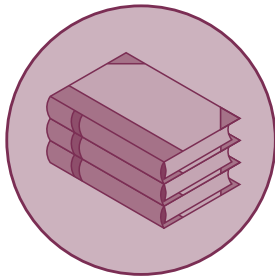
Nick Hudson
Chief Executive Officer
Ormiston Academies Trust

Dr Paul Hann
Chair of Trustees
Ormiston Academies Trust
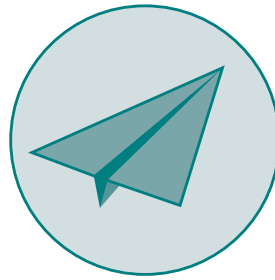
What are we here to do?

Our mission is to become the Trust that makes the biggest difference, both inside and outside the classroom.

TEACH   **DEVELOP**   **CHANGE**   **SUPPORT**

When we think about what kind of difference we want to make, this is defined by our three core purposes. Everything we do should be ultimately focused on doing these three things well:

- Teach: We will teach all our pupils the knowledge and skills they are entitled to, and how to apply this in how they think and work.
- Develop: We will develop all our pupils socially and emotionally so that they can make good choices about education and life.
- Change: We will aim to understand what is needed for any pupil to excel, so we can create schools where no one is disadvantaged.

In order to achieve our purposes, we also need to have an organisation that is well designed and run:

- Support: We will support this work by being efficient and by investing in getting the best from our people, resources, estate and technology.

In order to deliver fully on our core purposes there are things we intend to change. Our priorities for change will be our focus and they will shape how we invest our resources:

- Curriculum and teaching
- Specialist practitioners
- Learning time
- Knowledge for opportunity
- Focus on education

The actions we will take and what success will look like for each priority for change is set out later in this document.

How will we do it?

These are our values. They reflect our aspirations for our culture:

Our values:

- Should apply equally to pupils, to our staff and to how we treat people outside our organisation.
- Should be reflected in how we recruit, reward and manage staff.
- Should be part of how we are held to account by our non-executive Trust Board and our local governing bodies.
- Should have alignment with, if not be uniformly expressed in, our individual school values.

Why do we work together?
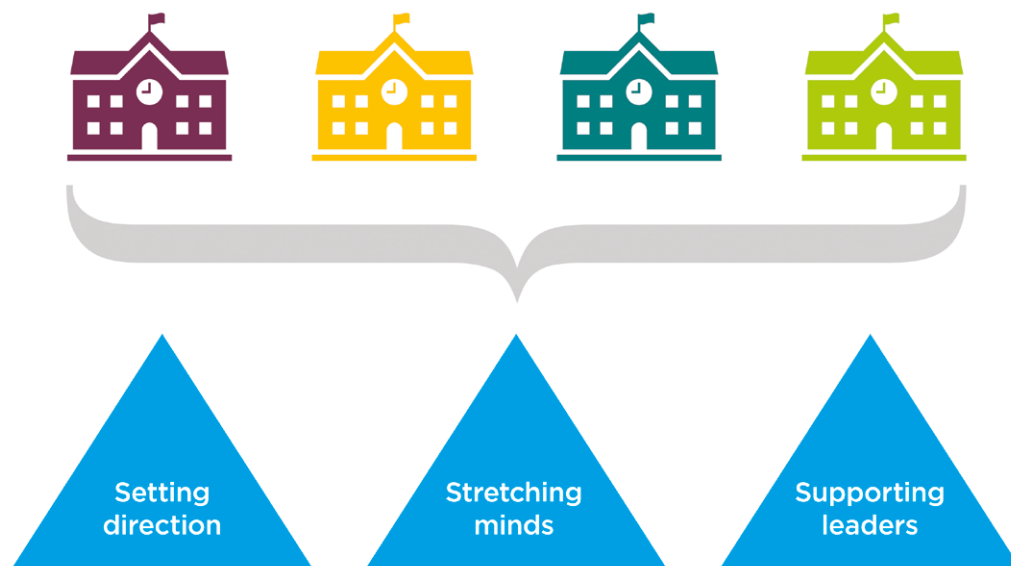
Academies have a choice to work alone or to come together. We choose to come together. One of our values is 'share what is best'. As a trust, this means:

- Setting direction: We are part of the education system, but we will set our own direction. We will take responsibility for using the freedoms we have been given to deliver the best education we can. Our size and national spread gives us a voice to speak up on behalf of our pupils, staff and communities, and we will use that voice to their benefit.

- Stretching minds: Education is a pursuit of the mind. We will encourage our pupils and staff to read, to learn and to debate. We recognise the value of expertise and will try and capture the wealth of knowledge across our large workforce so that it can be shared. People who are overworked are less mentally agile. We will use our scale to be more efficient which helps make workloads manageable and expectations fair.

- Supporting our people: We believe the strongest leaders are those who are supported and who support others. Our regional structure creates a network that means problems are shared and successes arise from teamwork. We will create opportunities within our organisation so many staff in many different roles can see how they can develop professionally and progress in their careers.

Within the Trust, it is our school improvement function that has particular responsibility for turning collaboration into improvement. This strategy document sets out the key elements of what we intend to change in order to improve our schools. More detail is contained in our school improvement strategy.

As of January 2019, our trust contains 7 primary schools, 1 special school and 31 secondary schools. Over the lifetime of this strategy we expect to continue to grow sustainably, where this aligns with our values and is in accord with our strategic direction. When taking on new schools we will be mindful of: the balance of primary, secondary and special schools within the Trust; being open to including a wide profile of schools; and the role that geography plays in how we work together.

Who are the pupils we serve?

As a national trust and an education charity, we serve pupils from many communities, all with their unique character, strengths and challenges. We have new schools and ones with a long history; academically focused schools and others with an impressive technical offer. Our pupils speak many different home languages and represent many different ethnicities, social classes and religions. One of our values is to 'be inclusive', and we live this through our mission to make the difference to all our pupils, whoever they are.

However, while no pupil or community is quite the same as any other, there are equally commonalities. Compared to the rest of England, our pupils are more likely to be white, and more likely to be disadvantaged. As a result, around a third of our pupils are white, British and disadvantaged, and we are particularly mindful of the needs of this group.

What do we want to achieve?

If we are to make the biggest difference, inside and outside the classroom, our success will not only be measured in academic outcomes. We value the wider enrichment experience which educates the whole child, giving our pupils improved life chances. However, academic outcomes need to be part of how we judge what we have achieved. Overall, we will want to see that the difference we make to children and young people in the round is exceptional.

On academic measures alone, we are committed to being among the top 20% of trusts within the lifetime of the strategy. We consider we will have met this aim when as a trust we have reached the level of the top 20% of trusts on the following two key measures:

Overall success measure	Baseline (2018 prov)	Threshold (2016/17)	2020	2021	2022	2023
KS2 progress score for reading, writing and maths combined for all pupils	0.01	1.26	0.5	0.75	1.0	1.26
KS4 Progress 8 score for all pupils	-0.09	0.23	0.05	0.10	0.16	0.23

The difference we make outside the classroom is harder to measure. The evaluation framework at the end of this document sets out how we will track our progress across a number of areas we consider to be important. Part of the work of the strategy will be to expand our ability to judge the difference we make beyond the academic. As our suite of measures grows, we intend to identify and add an overall success measure to those above that reflects the difference we make outside the classroom.

What are we going to do differently?

Some of our schools serve all their pupils well. Having some success, however, will not be enough to reach our goal of being in the top 20% of trusts, or to enable us to fully deliver on our purposes. We need to be much more consistently good in every classroom, for every pupil.

We recognise that there will always be variation in how teachers teach. Every classroom and every school is unique, and we consider that to be a strength. But variation in approach should not mean variation in quality.

The actions of this strategy are about creating alignment, not uniformity. We need to do more to understand what is working and be deliberate about sharing that across our schools.
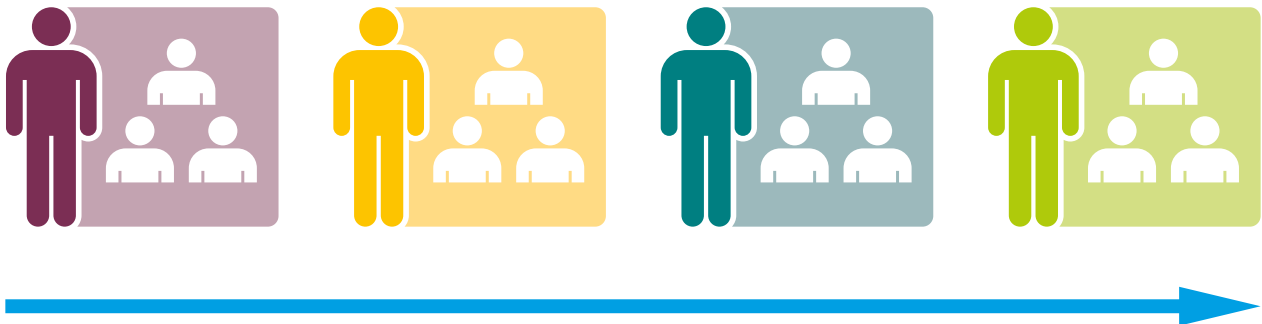

Theory of change

We want a level playing field for our pupils, but it is not level yet. We want all our pupils to achieve, but this won't happen unless we recognise that underachievement does not happen randomly. Our schools that do best for all pupils regardless of background do not achieve this by chance. They have developed support that takes away some of the barriers that keep children from meeting their potential.

To support this strategy, we are developing a theory of change. This brings together the lessons from our schools with international evidence about what works. Our priority areas for action reflect what is in our causal analysis about how disadvantage in communities can result in lower achievement for individual pupils. This does not mean focusing on some pupils at the expense of others. It does mean being deliberate about understanding the structural reasons that can result in background having an impact on attainment.

Curriculum and teaching
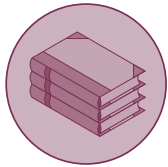
TEACH

Why is this a priority?

One of our core purposes is to TEACH. We know from our own schools and from others that have succeeded with all their pupils whatever their background is that the most important thing is getting the basics right.

All human beings have a right to acquire knowledge and skill in every subject before they leave education. The actions within this priority area are about making sure all pupils receive their full entitlement. We want to create greater consistency and alignment in what we do, so that every classroom can share in our collective knowledge of what makes for the best curriculum and teaching.

What will success look like?

- The curriculum and assessment in every school will reflect shared principles about quality.
- We will have a culture where the strongest teachers will feel free to use their expertise in whatever way they feel benefits pupils most.
- There will be active support and materials available to help every teacher maintain and then exceed a basic minimum standard in their teaching.
- Teachers at all stages in their careers will progress in their practice through a managed programme of training and support.

What are we going to do?

- Review our teaching and curriculum across the Trust so we know in detail where our strengths and weaknesses lie.
- Agree shared principles for quality for teaching, curriculum and assessment.
- Recruit a cadre of lead practitioners to drive forward our development of teaching and the curriculum.
- Use our lead practitioners and subject specialists to decide what knowledge and skills pupils are entitled to in each subject.
- Where we have gaps, source better options from inside the Trust or invest in materials from outside the Trust that meet our quality standards.
- Create a directory of training that will support teachers to improve their practice.
- Review our curriculum offer so that every programme of study and enrichment activity has a strong rationale for inclusion.

Specialist practitioners

SUPPORT   TEACH
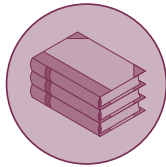
Why is this a priority?

In order to achieve our goals we need to have the right people in our schools and in the Trust. Our staff have a strong sense of moral purpose and have chosen to work where circumstances can be very challenging. Our best leaders and managers keep staff motivated and committed even when under pressure, and we want every school and every team to achieve that culture and level of support.

There are some staff groups that face particular recruitment challenges. Nationally, fewer teachers are being recruited and there are increasing numbers leaving the profession. Many of our schools struggle to attract qualified and experienced teachers, for a variety of reasons. Similarly, the government is investing in children's mental health, but access to the professionals who can provide support has been very challenging for a long time and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Alternative provision can be equally inaccessible. The pressure on local authority budgets has resulted in 47 local authority areas where there are no spaces in any pupil referral unit. If we want our pupils to get the help they need, we will need to employ or contract directly with specialists.

What will success look like?

- Our staff will tell us that their roles are challenging but achievable and they feel valued for their knowledge and expertise.
- The level of turnover will be healthy, and when leaders and managers seek to recruit they will be able to reliably attract high quality candidates.
- None of our classes will be taught by unqualified teachers, except where that is a deliberate choice.
- Pupils will have access to professionals that can offer specialist help in a way that is timely, expert, and appropriate to their needs.

What are we going to do?

- Emphasise the importance of subjects and sharing knowledge so that teachers are motivated to stay in teaching.
- Invest in mental health to expand clinical expertise, increase the availability of support for pupils and give counselling staff clinical supervision.
- Review the availability of alternative provision in each area and explore the options to level out access across our schools.
- Create an OAT Institute of Education that will facilitate privileged access for all our schools to graduates and newly qualified teachers from the UK and worldwide.
- Develop the OAT Institute of Education to provide support for NQTs, continuous professional development and educational research.
- Invest in technology and training so that all our staff can reliably use virtual communication channels to link staff, pupils and external expertise across the Trust.

Learning time

CHANGE DEVELOP

Why is this a priority?

One of the important factors in our theory of change is the positive difference that learning time makes to attainment. A pupil that learns at home, attends school regularly and is involved in enrichment activities outside the formal curriculum can accumulate 40% more learning time in a single year than a peer who is persistently absent and whose only learning is through the timetable.

This trust has always had a strong commitment to the wider curriculum and the value that enrichment gives. Our aim to make that commitment more sharply focused on the pupils who need it most. One of our core purposes is DEVELOP and we could be clearer about the work enrichment should do to develop pupils socially and emotionally.

What will success look like?

- Consistently low levels of absence across our schools.
- Enrichment will not be a bolt-on but will be seen as the informal element of our wider curriculum.
- The informal curriculum will make a measurable contribution to all aspects of the whole pupil: knowledge, skill, social and emotional development, life skills and experiences.

What are we going to do?

- Identify where schools have been successful in reducing absence and what can be replicated.
- Agree clear priorities for enrichment and review our offer so that all enrichment activities are purposeful.
- Seek external funding and internal investment to expand the enrichment offer, focusing on activities that will have measurable impact.
- Introduce a comparable approach to assessing how pupils are developing in the round.
- Invest in tools to record and analyse participation in enrichment activities.
- Undertake research with parents and pupils to understand why pupils do not take up the learning that is on offer.

Knowledge for opportunity

CHANGE

Why is this a priority?

One of our core purposes is CHANGE. Our theory of change says that an important contributing factor to underachievement is that different communities have different access to knowledge about what it takes to use education to achieve prosperity.

If we want all our pupils to succeed, then we will need to make sure that we are sharing knowledge, not just with our pupils, but with parents. One of the strengths in our communities is that many families have strong roots, and parents themselves went to school locally. However, their experiences were not always positive. In some cases we will need to rebuild trust before the door will be open to sharing that knowledge.

What will success look like?

- Important dates when parents are invited into schools will attract high attendance.
- Parents will be well equipped to help with homework and reinforce the curriculum, throughout primary and secondary.
- Pupils will be actively encouraged by parents to choose high tariff subjects and make their next educational step an ambitious one.

What are we going to do?

- Develop subject materials for parents so that they can reinforce learning at home whatever their own level of knowledge.
- Develop social and emotional learning materials that include activities and discussions to do at home.
- Identify where schools have been successful in increasing parental attendance and what can be replicated.
- Revise our curriculum offer to link more strongly to the local economy, prioritising clear routes to higher paid careers in local industries.
- Review different approaches to assessment and identify what gives parents and pupils the best insight into what has been learnt and what pupils need to do next.
- Develop a shared bank of resources on careers, higher and further education that reflect the best of what is available inside and outside the Trust and can be used by both schools and at home.

Focus on education

SUPPORT

Why is this a priority?

Our core purposes depend on having a strong organisation to SUPPORT how we deliver our educational aims. As a trust, we have grown organically, and our ways of working have not always kept pace with our evolution. If we are to become a top-performing trust we will need the people, technology, estate and information that are among the best in education.

Research tells us that an important factor in excellent education is that senior educationalists can focus on the business of curriculum, assessment, teaching and pedagogy. In order for this to be consistently the case, we will need to invest in those people in the Trust who support our educationalists.

What will success look like?

- Principals are able to concentrate on the management of teaching and school improvement because they are backed by support functions that run smoothly and efficiently.
- All staff and pupils benefit from similarly high-quality learning environment and facilities.
- Our staff feel like they are part of an inclusive family where the culture of collaboration means all understand and are committed to what we want to achieve.
- Our support staff are well trained and qualified to perform the roles that we need them to do. Those who want to can develop and progress further within OAT.

What are we going to do?

- Maintain open and transparent bidding systems for investment in our schools for the benefit for staff and pupils.
- Reduce our spend on buying goods and services by negotiating better deals using the purchasing power of a large trust.
- Invest in creating professional disciplines for those roles that support our education functions.
- Review the disparities in support across our schools and change how we work to make it easier to give every pupil a similar standard of provision.
- Develop our analytical and communication capability with the introduction of a shared data analysis infrastructure, common MIS, data storage, security, full connectivity with video capability and template platforms for internet and intranet.
- Consider the whole life of school buildings to reduce operational burdens, energy consumption and environmental impact.
- Take a long term view of the need for expansion, replacement or change of use so that school buildings meet the demands of high quality teaching and learning.

How will we know we have succeeded?

Evaluation framework

Out-turn on 2020 targets will be in January 2020, using data from the academic and financial year 2018/19. The evaluation framework captures areas of particular focus across the Trust and throughout the lifetime of the strategy. We will continue to monitor individual schools using a range of measures relevant to them.

Baseline for January 2019			Baseline	National (2017)	2020	2021	2022	2023
TEACH	T1	% disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS2	52% (2018 prov)	47% (64% all)	50%	54%	59%	64%
	T2	% KS4 pupils graded 4+ for both English and maths	54.1% (2018 prov)	65.2% (2018)	55%	56%	58%	60%
	T3	% KS4 pupils graded 5+ for both English and maths	30.3% (2018 prov)	43.9% (2018)	34%	36%	38%	40%
	T4	Progress score for disadvantaged pupils with high prior attainment (secondary)	-0.53 (2018 prov)	n/a	-0.45	-0.35	-0.20	0.0
	T5	Progress score for White British disadvantaged pupils (secondary)	-0.47 (2018 prov)	n/a	-0.40	-0.30	-0.15	0.0
	T6	Average point score all Level 3 qualifications	27.79 (2018 prov)	32.02	30.25	31.00	32.00	33.00
	T7	% classroom teachers without relevant subject qualification	8% (2017)	7%	5%	3%	2%	< 1%
DEVELOP	D1	% pupils sustaining a place at university	52% (2017)	59%	53%	55%	57%	59%
	D2	% pupils sustaining a place at a Russell Group university	4.9% (2017)	17%	6%	7%	8.5%	10%
	D3	% pupils sustaining an apprenticeship after KS5	9.5% (2017)	6%	10.5%	11.5%	13%	15%
	D4	% of pupils not sustaining any education, employment or training after KS4 (NEET)	7.7% (2017)	6.1%	7%	6%	5%	4%
CHANGE	C1	% overall absence in primary	4.37% (aut 2018)	4.0%	4.25%	4.10%	3.90%	3.75%
	C2	% pupils with persistent absence in primary	11.35% (aut 2018)	8.3%	11.00%	10.00%	8.75%	7.50%
	C3	% overall absence in secondary	5.68% (2017)	4.7%	5.55%	5.15%	4.8%	4.5%
	C4	% pupils with persistent absence in secondary	13.69% (2017)	12.40%	13%	12%	11%	10%
	C5	EBacc average point score	3.39 (2018 prov)	4.11	3.55	3.70	3.90	4.10
	C6	% pupils with high prior attainment entered for the EBacc	33.7% (2018 prov)	57.2%	35%	40%	52%	58%

SUPPORT	S1	Reserves as proportion of budget	3.8% (2018)	3% to 5%	3.0%	2.4%	3.0%	3.1%
	S2	% school budgets delivered within tolerance of the budget forecast	33% (2018)	n/a	60%	75%	80%	85%
	S3	Building Condition Index score	32 (2018)	n/a	28	27	27	26

Expanded framework for January 2020

TEACH	T8	% KS4 subjects with grade average above 4.5 and above 35% participation
	T9	% primary curriculums that meet quality principles
	T10	% secondary subject curriculums that meet quality principles
	T11	% pupils in KS2 at KS1 standard (SEN/not)
	T12	% pupils in KS3 at KS2 standard for combined expected progress (SEN/not)
	T13	% pupils with high prior attainment graded 5+ for both English and maths
	T13	% national curriculum subjects with primary subject specialists within the Trust
	T15	% pupils with high prior attainment in middle or lower set for any core subject

DEVELOP	D5	% pupils intending to apply to university
	D6	% pupils intending to apply for apprenticeship following KS5
	D7	% pupils assessed against whole pupil assessment model
	D8	Social and emotional assessment scores by Key Stage
	D9	Life skills and experiences assessment scores by Key Stage
	D10	% pupils identified with mental health issue or condition receiving specialist help within one month
	D11	% pupils leaving out of phase (Y9 to Y10, Y10 to Y11)

CHANGE	C7	% participation in enrichment activities (disadvantaged/not)
	C8	% pupils participating in social action (disadvantaged/not)
	C9	Total weekly informal learning hours attended as proportion of total offer (disadvantaged/not)
	C10	% Trust pupil premium budget spent on identified priorities
	C11	% pupils with parents attending formal progress meetings (disadvantaged/not)
	C12	% departments formally sharing curriculum content with parents

SUPPORT	S4	% hard to fill posts vacant
	S5	Average working days lost to absence
	S6	Staff engagement score
	S7	% staff with jobs aligned to trust framework
	S8	% projects red rated (budget/milestones/quality)
	S9	Governor posts vacant for more than three months
	S10	Number of safeguarding incidents (identified/resolved within timescales)

Appendix 1

A particular educational challenge

In this strategy we set out clearly that we serve every pupil from every background and that this inclusivity is one of our core values. However, we also recognise that educational underachievement does not happen randomly. It is our expectation that in years to come, the high proportion of white British disadvantaged pupils we serve will have no special significance for our trust or our schools. We see no reason why your background should make any difference to your achievements.

However, in 2019, we know that nationally this group of pupils is the most likely in secondary to achieve below the level of promise they showed in primary school. This is a national challenge that has been recognised by policy-makers across the political spectrum. This is also the case in our schools.

While for two of our primary schools there are no gaps, for the cohort overall disadvantaged pupils progress less well on every measure. The gap is 0.33 for reading, 0.31 for writing and 0.20 for maths. Our cohort of pupils in primary is only 250 and therefore too small to reliably analyse by either ethnicity or disadvantage.

The chart below shows how ethnicity and disadvantage intersect in our secondary schools. This is a very large cohort of 4,000 pupils.


Progress score by pupil characteristics in Key Stage 4 (provisional estimates 2018)

If we expect to see progress rise to the level we want, we will need to understand why some groups of pupils receive the same education but perform very differently. This will not be about copying established practice, as this is a conundrum that has not yet been solved at scale in this country.

However, this is not to say that pupils from this group do not meet their potential in all our schools. In five schools, progress for these pupils is above zero, including one school where it is 0.54. There is a strong relationship between overall good performance and good progress from pupils of all backgrounds. First and foremost, all our schools must get the basics right.

It is also the case that teaching is not enough. All of our schools that do best for these pupils have very extensive pastoral support, enrichment opportunities and parental engagement.

It is the pupils who performed best in their prior phase who are most at risk. For our primary schools, our teaching and curriculum serves pupils with low prior attainment best.
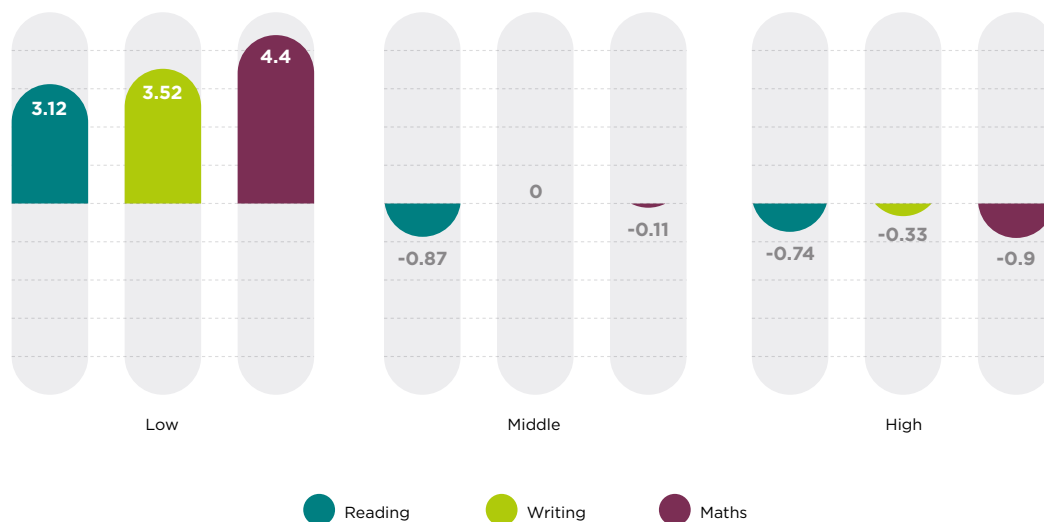
Progress scores by prior attainment in Key Stage 2 (provisional estimates 2018)

This pattern continues in our secondary schools. However, at this phase (and with a much larger cohort), we can see that it is the pupils from low income backgrounds who have shown in primary school that they are able to achieve highly who are most likely to struggle from 12 to 16.
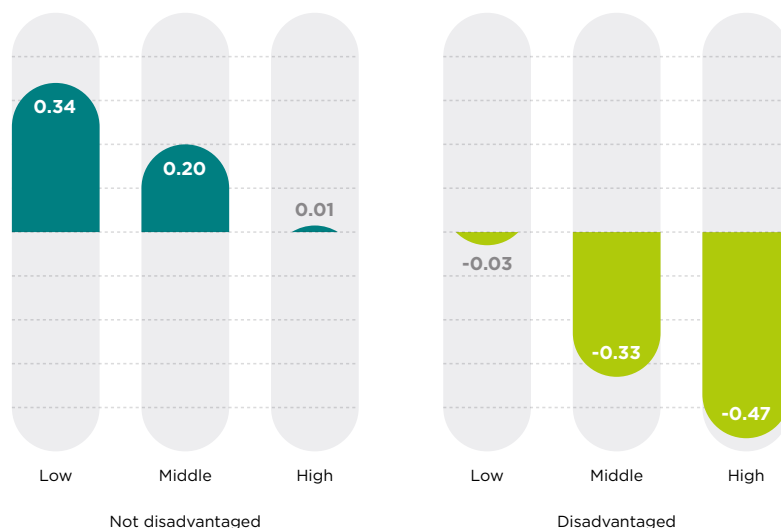
Progress scores by prior attainment and pupil characteristics in Key Stage 4 (provisional estimates 2018)

Our aim in delivering our strategy will be to use our theory of change to test whether what we are doing is working to break the pattern that we see now. We will maintain a focus on those pupils who are most at risk of underachieving, while also being vigilant that we do not allow the common pattern of underachievement to lead us to think that better is not possible.