

# Supporting schools during the pandemic – an LA perspective

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#FFTCNF22

# **The Impact of Covid and the RADY Project**

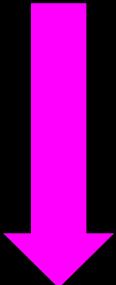
A few years ago, chance observation in a Wirral school revealed something very interesting, and **EXTREMELY** relevant to the persistence of attainment gaps...

### **KS4 Targets set by a school**

|              | <b>All</b> | <b>Boys</b> | <b>Girls</b> | <b>FSM</b> | <b>Non-FSM</b> |
|--------------|------------|-------------|--------------|------------|----------------|
| English A*-C | 67%        | 63%         | 70%          | 43%        | 77%            |
| Maths A*-C   | 64%        | 66%         | 62%          | 45%        | 72%            |

## KS4 Targets set by a school

|              | All | Boys | Girls | FSM | Non-FSM | Gap |
|--------------|-----|------|-------|-----|---------|-----|
| English A*-C | 67% | 63%  | 70%   | 43% | 77%     | 34% |
| Maths A*-C   | 64% | 66%  | 62%   | 45% | 72%     | 27% |



In short, the school was **AIMING** to have a gap.

And it wasn't alone.

Other schools were asked for a breakdown of their targets.

***Without exception, the targets schools set for disadvantaged children were lower than the ones they set for other children.***

The reason was simple: *most schools based pupil targets, to a greater or lesser degree, on prior attainment.*

*This is at the heart of the English education system. And it is an important factor in the widening of the gaps.*

Schools didn't set out consciously to have lower academic expectations for disadvantaged children.

The lower academic expectations were accidental: they were built into the schools' target-setting systems.

We know that expectations have a very powerful influence on performance. But it's not just the expectations of the children and their families - there is plenty of research to show that ***the expectations of the schools are at least as important.***

So a key reason why, despite the enormous efforts of schools, the gaps haven't closed significantly (especially at KS4) is that many, many schools have been aiming to maintain the gaps, albeit inadvertently.

# Target Setting Summary

Schools set examination targets for children in different ways. Many schools might use Fischer Family Trust to generate targets for pupils.

But simply choosing a more aspirational FFT model, e.g. FFT 5 or FFT 20, doesn't help on its own.

*But whatever the approach used, the targets set for individual children are usually based very heavily on prior attainment: what a child achieved in the last key stage of education is used as the starting point for generating future targets.*

*And since disadvantaged children tend to have suppressed prior attainment their targets are lower - the expectations of the schools for them, as expressed through targets, are generally lower.*

*And in doing this many schools were doing no more than following the advice offered by local authority advisers - people like me, for instance!*

The school expectations gap  
*(i.e. the gap in targets)*

is up to

***two thirds***

of the eventual attainment gap

## Teacher expectations

A report by the Social Mobility Commission in 2017 stated:

*'The literature tentatively suggests that teacher expectations may be lower for low income pupils, and that these lower expectations can limit progress, although the evidence for these claims is far from complete'*

*Low income pupils' progress at secondary school  
Social Mobility Commission  
27 February 2017*

# Near misses

The scaled score gap at KS2 is typically 4 points.

This doesn't sound much, but given an education system that's based on thresholds - you either 'pass' or you don't - it's more than enough.

96 instead of 100 makes all the difference. But the stakes are even higher at GCSE - just a one paper mark short means not getting a 'good' grade, and not getting the opportunities such grades allow.

**Near misses aren't rewarded. in threshold systems.**

## Which gaps are important?

Areas where there are very small gaps

- Sock ownership
- Yacht ownership
- The percentage of pupils with a scaled score of more than 80
- 1 or more 9-1 grades at GCSE

Some gaps don't matter much.

Others do.

## Questions employers never ask a young applicant:

- Did you achieve a good level of development when you were in the early years?
- What was your phonics score?
- Tell me about your progress measures in primary school
- What was your Progress 8 result in secondary school?
- What was your Attainment 8 score in secondary school?

*Now all these **are** important measures - and how they change over time are important indicators of a school's success.*

**But it's not just any attainment gap.**

"What matters to children from low-income families is that a school enables them to achieve a qualification to get on in life."

*Dr Rebecca Allen, Director, Education Datalab*

*'Pupil Premium - Next Steps'*

*Sutton Trust and Education Endowment Foundation 2015*

# The RADY Project

*Raising the Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters*

The RADY Project is focused on closing a key attainment gap at each stage e.g.

KS1: the expected standard in Reading, Writing and maths ***combined***

KS2: the expected standard in Reading, Writing and maths ***combined***

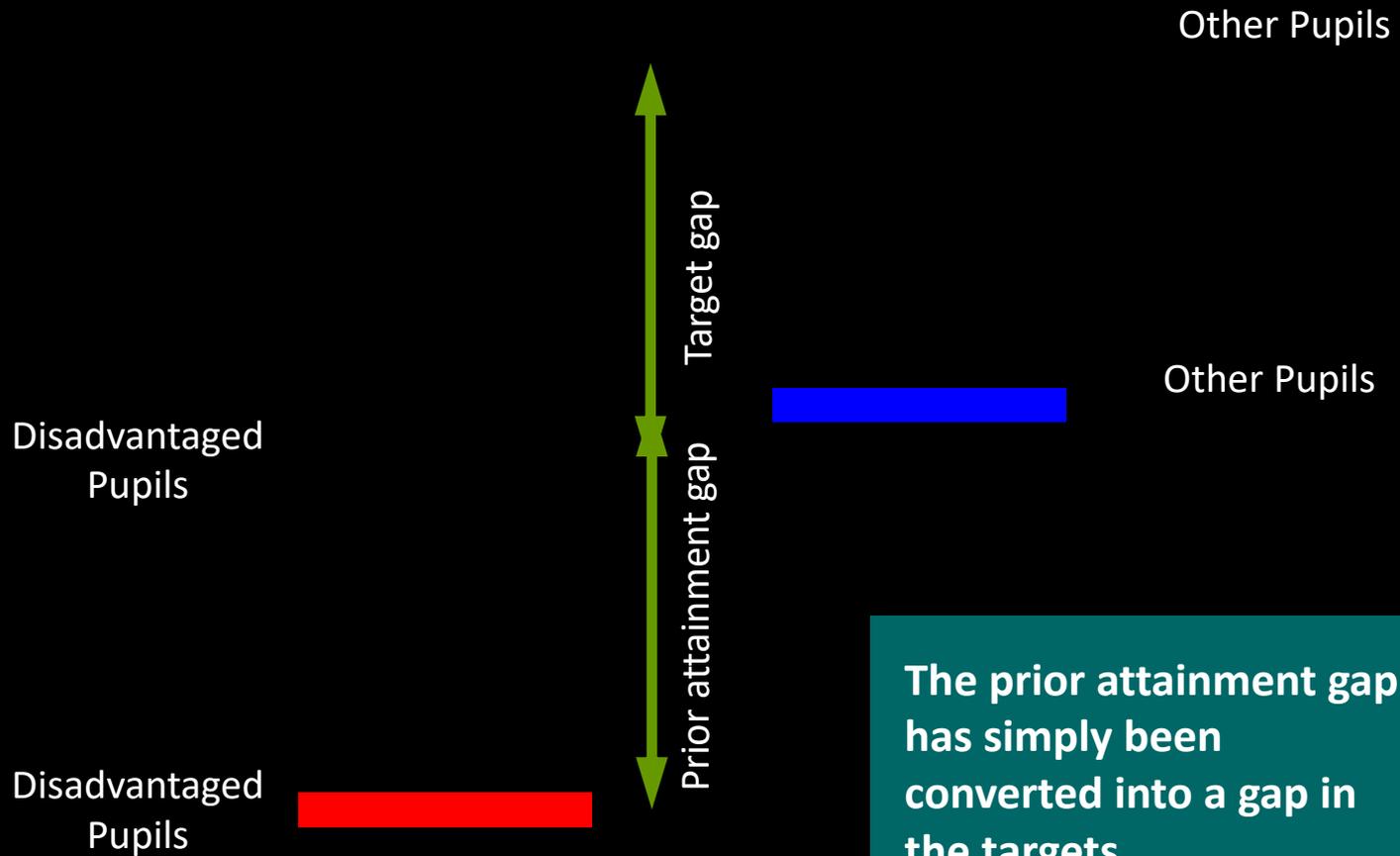
KS4: good grades in ***both*** English and maths

But before we can close an attainment gap we must first close any expectations gap we may have

*We do this by ensuring that the **attainment** targets we set for disadvantaged children aren't just ambitious, but that they are as ambitious as the ones we set for other children.*

*That's what **RADY** is.*

# Prior attainment getting converted into a targets gap...



# The RADY Approach: Step 1.

## Target setting - putting your money where your mouth is

To ensure we don't have low attainment expectations for disadvantaged children, targets for disadvantaged children **MUST** be adjusted to coincide with those for other children

Disadvantaged Pupils

Other Pupils

Disadvantaged Pupils

Other Pupils

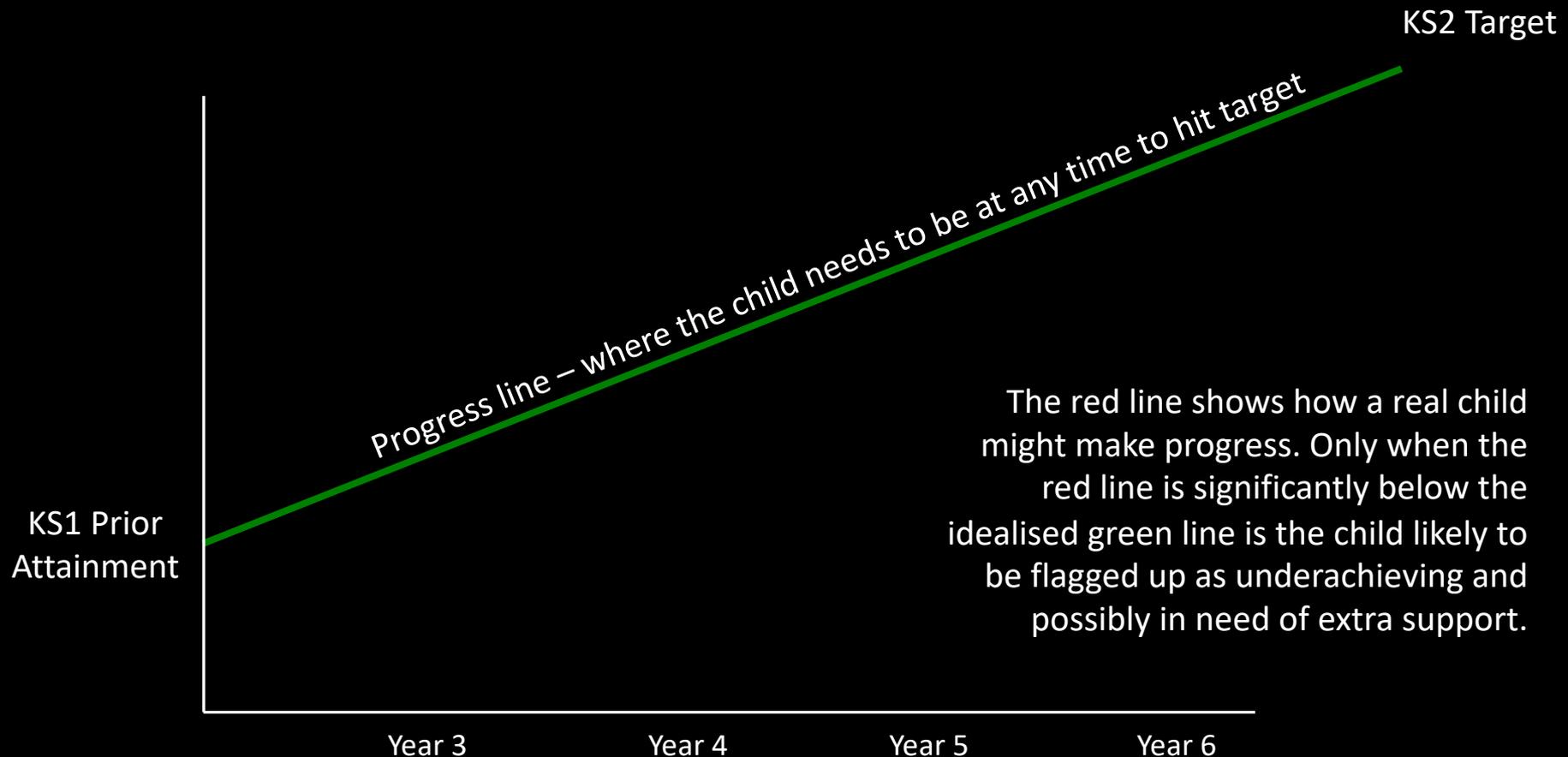
Prior attainment gap

Now there is no gap in the targets between the two groups - expectations are equal.

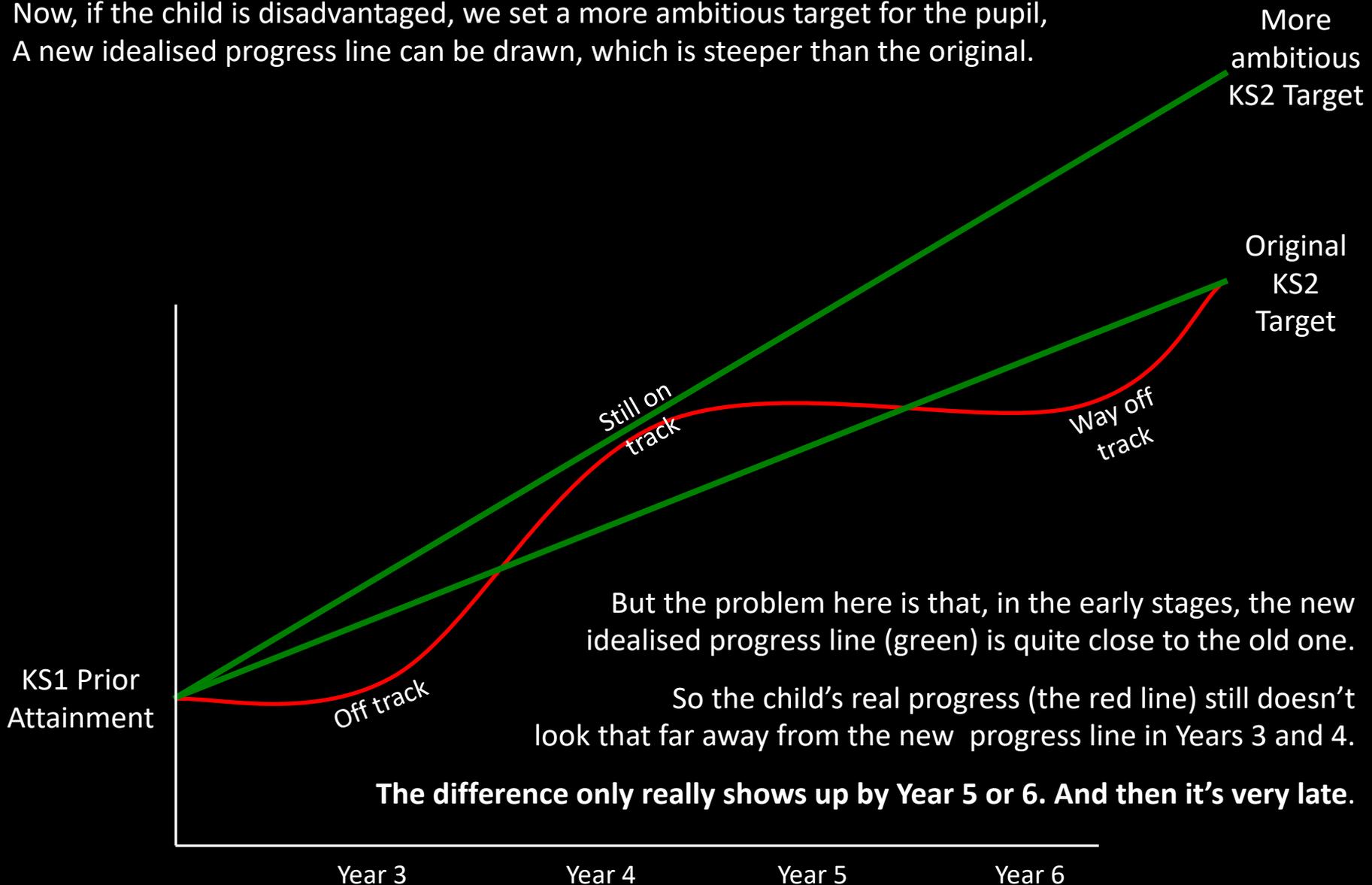


**But another, less obvious, step is equally important.  
*We need to fool the school's tracking system.***

Below is a grossly simplified picture of how pupils are expected to make progress.



Now, if the child is disadvantaged, we set a more ambitious target for the pupil, A new idealised progress line can be drawn, which is steeper than the original.

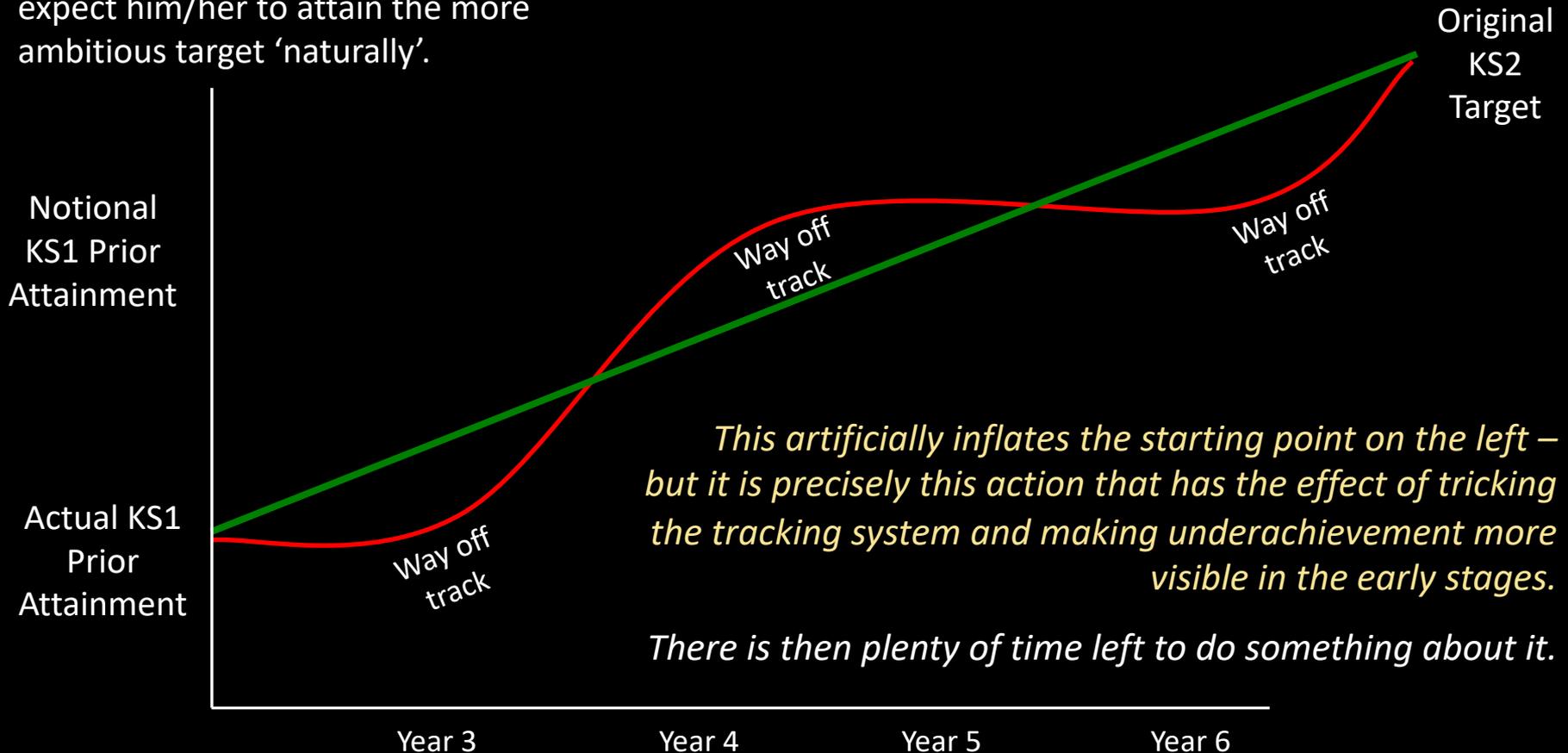


# The RADY Approach: Step 2

A way around the problem is to generate a new progress line that ends at the target, but is **parallel** to the old progress line.

More  
ambitious  
KS2 Target

A notional KS1 prior attainment is calculated. If this were the child's prior attainment, we might expect him/her to attain the more ambitious target 'naturally'.



# Two questions for a school

## **Question 1**

Does your school have the same academic aspirations for disadvantaged children as for other children?

## **Question 2**

On **average**, if you set targets for children, are the targets you set for disadvantaged children **systematically** lower than those for other children?

# Two questions for a school

## **Question 1**

Does your school have the same academic aspirations for disadvantaged children as for other children?

## **Question 2**

On **average**, if you set targets for children, are the targets you set for disadvantaged children **systematically** lower than those for other children?

**The answer can't be 'yes' to both!**

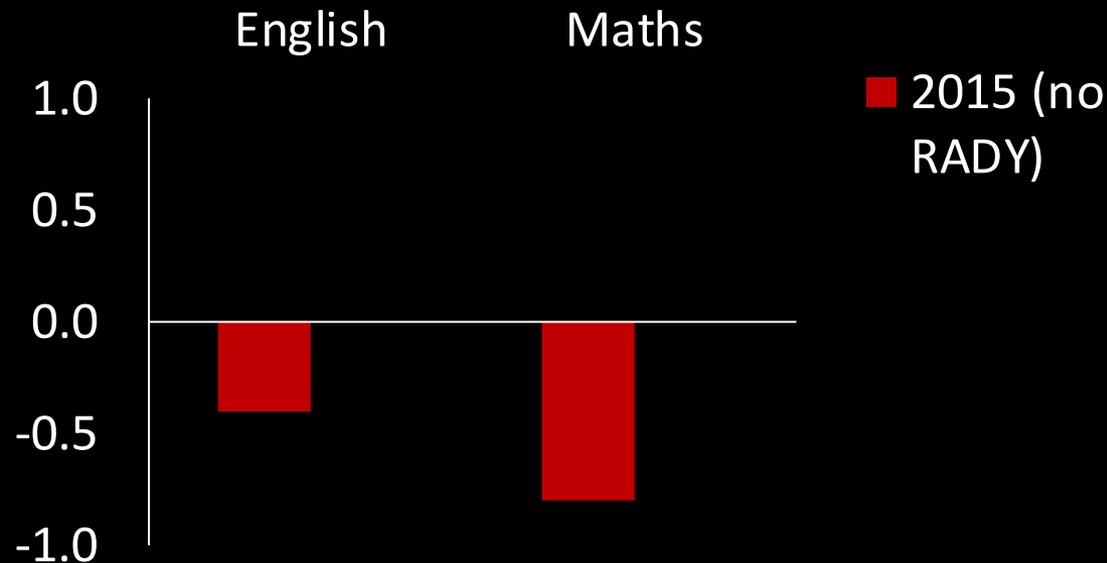
Such lower targets for disadvantaged children will almost certainly have the effect of seriously delaying vital intervention, or at least masking the degree of extra support needed.

***Only schools can change this because only schools set the attainment targets for children.***

# There is already evidence of impact for the RADY approach

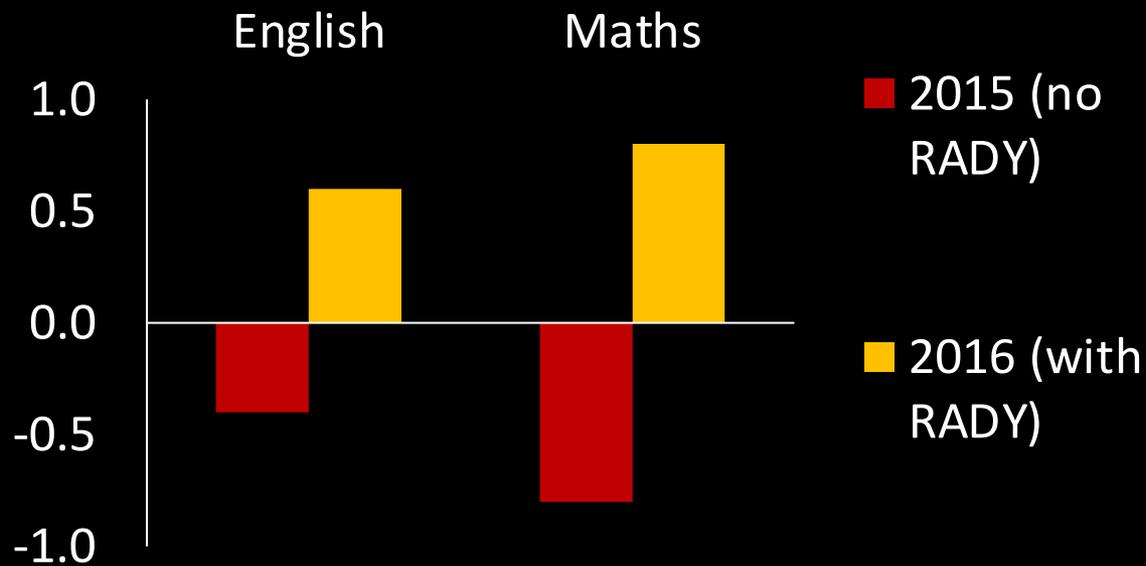
Data from one secondary school: relative progress of disadvantaged children compared with other children

## Y7 Progress



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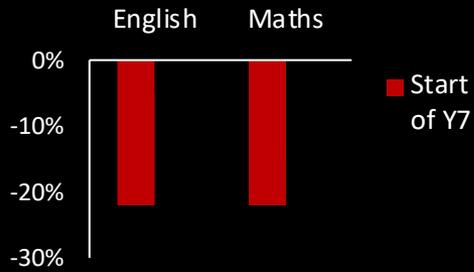
## Y7 Progress



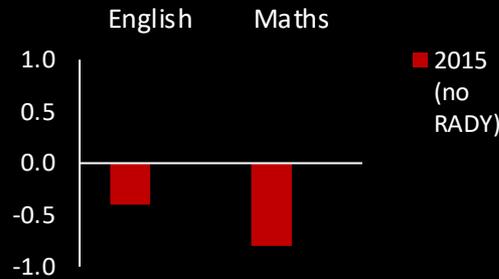
# Gaps data from schools involved in RADY project

■ Pre-RADY

## Age related expectations



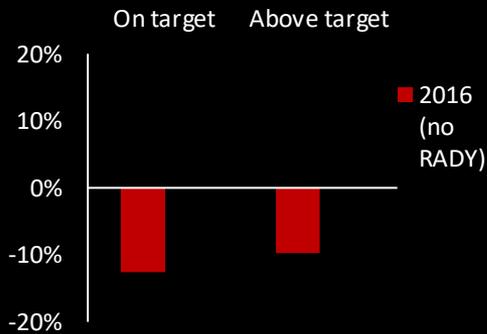
## Y7 Progress



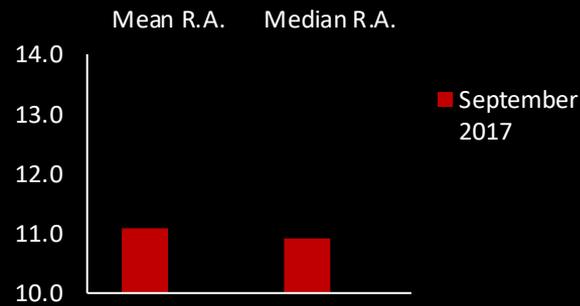
## Y7 tracking data



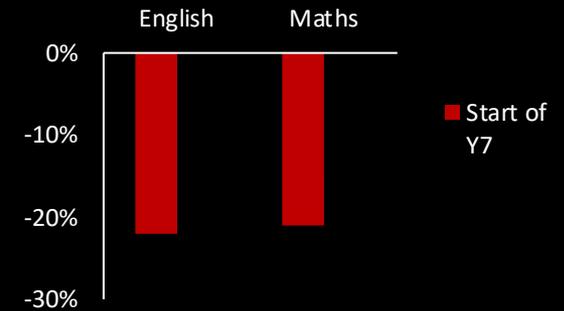
## Y7 tracking data



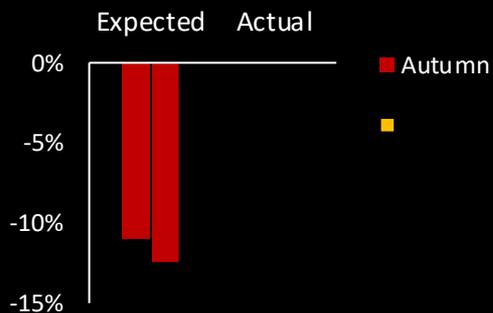
## DA reading ages



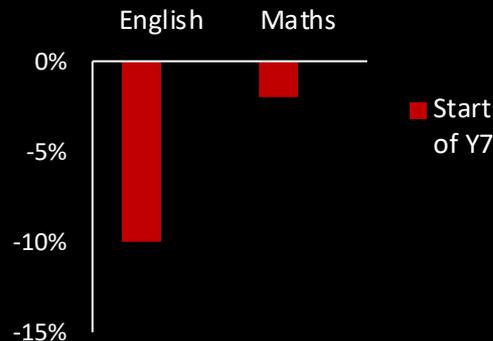
## Age related expectations



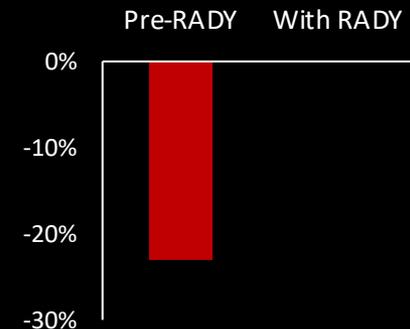
## Y7 teacher assessments (English and maths combined)



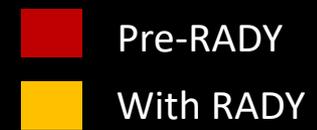
## % of pupils judged to be average+ attainment



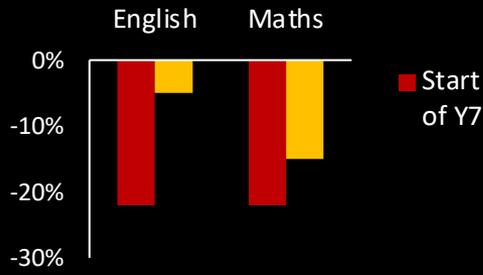
## % of pupils achieving English and maths GCSE



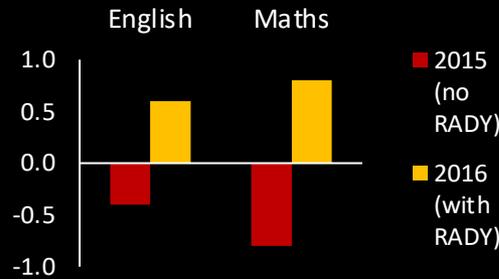
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## Age related expectations



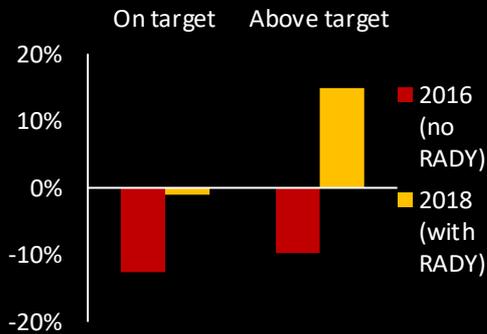
## Y7 Progress



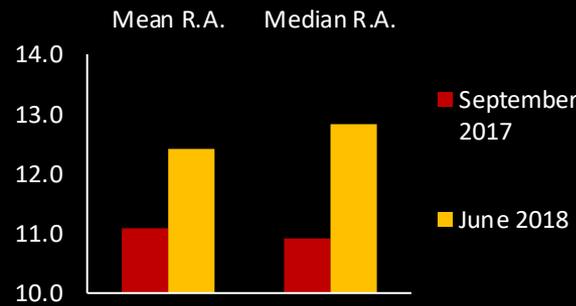
## Y7 tracking data



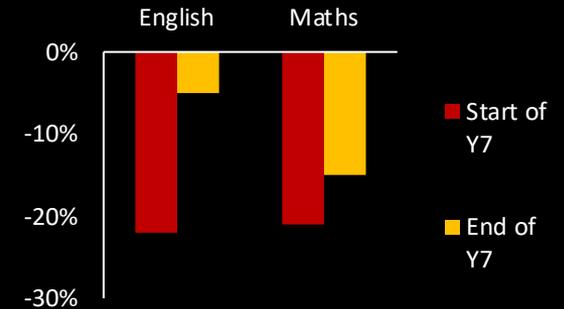
## Y7 tracking data



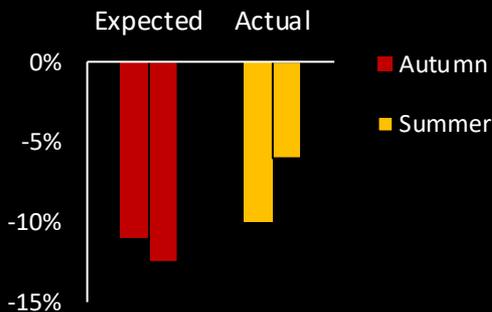
## DA reading ages



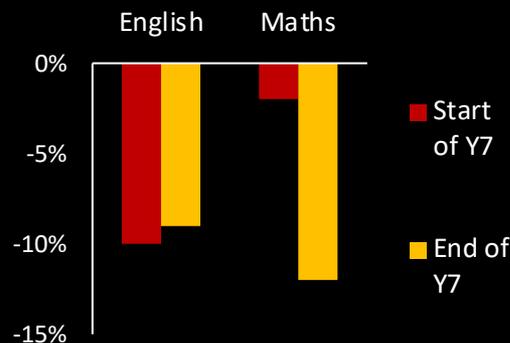
## Age related expectations



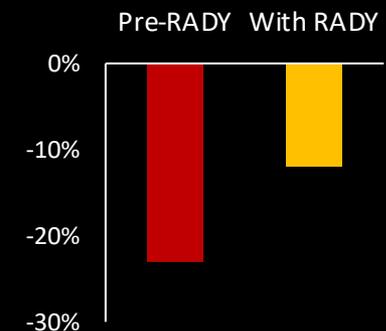
## Y7 teacher assessments (English and maths combined)



## % of pupils judged to be average+ attainment



## % of pupils achieving English and maths GCSE



## How else does the RADY project support schools?

Schools are provided with a longitudinal analysis of their gaps e.g. the gaps for, say, the Year 6 cohort are analysed from EYFS through to the latest assessment point. This helps schools to monitor their progress towards achieving equal outcomes for disadvantaged children and others.

Attendance is analysed in a similar way. The introduction of FFT's Attendance Tracker is going to be something of a game-changer here

Schools are helped to determine the degree to which disadvantaged children are proportionately represented in other areas e.g. extra-curricular activities, representation in various setting arrangements and so on.

Apart from training on the RADY approach, schools are provided with a tool to help them set equitable pupil-level targets

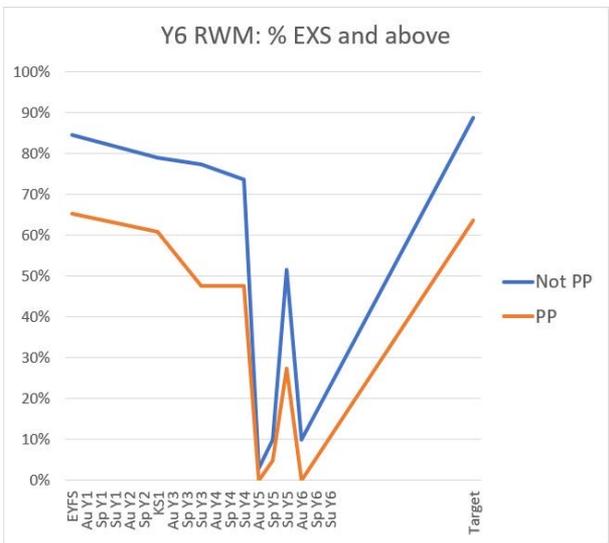
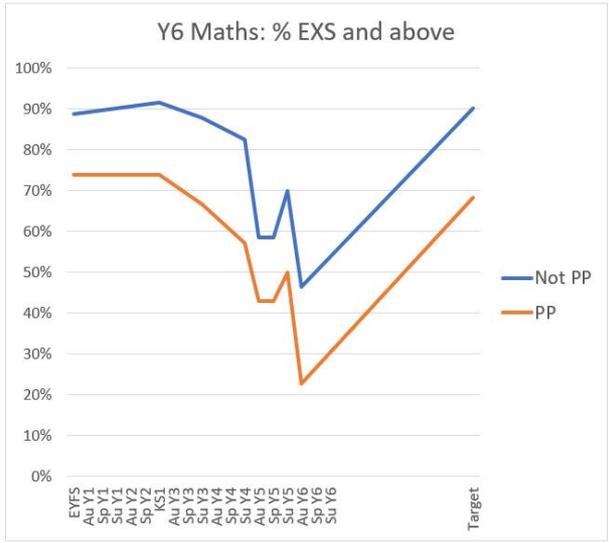
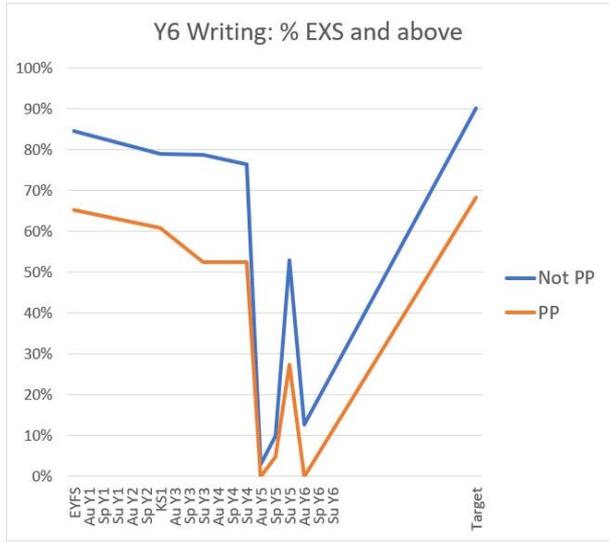
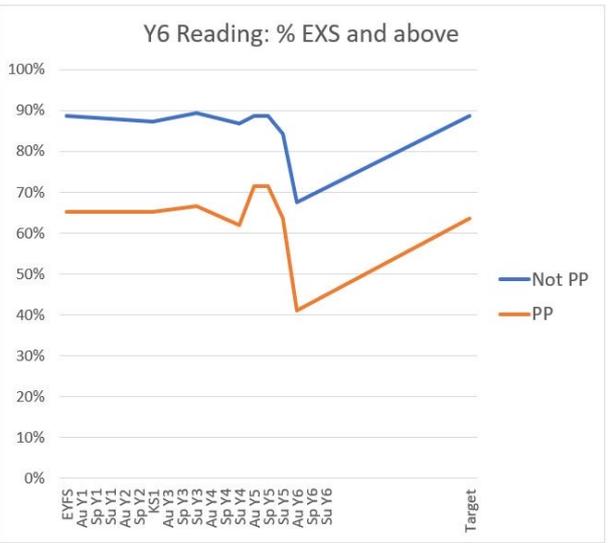
# Junior School

## Longitudinal gaps analysis for Year 6

Select Year Group

6

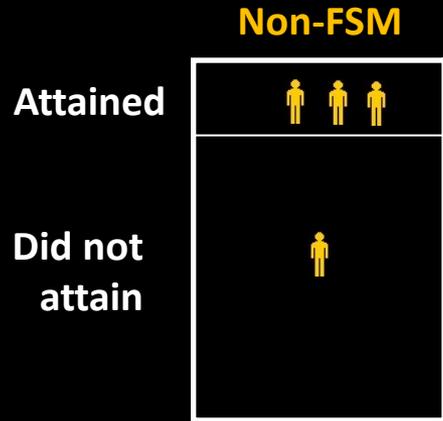
Get Data



## Another way to view the gaps

We start with EYFS and the non-FSM children.

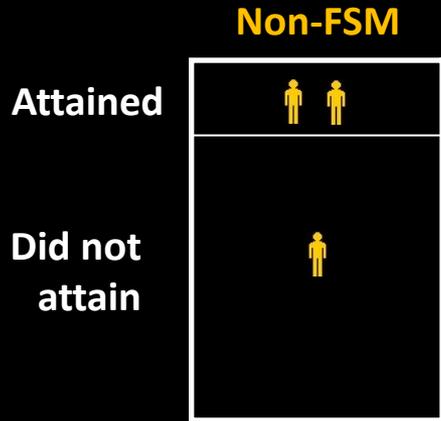
Good level of development: for every three non-FSM children who attained GLD there was one non-FSM child who didn't.



## KS2

Now for Key Stage 2 and the non-FSM children.

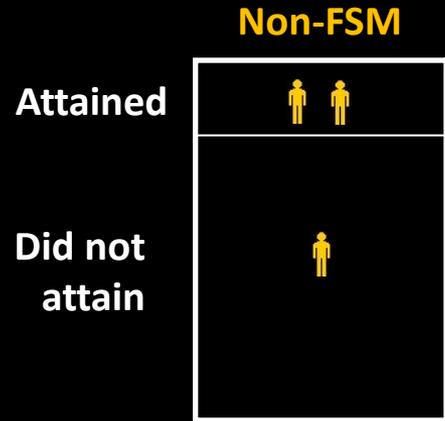
KS2: for every two non-FSM children who attained at L4b or above in reading and maths and L4+ in writing there was one non-FSM child who didn't.



## Now for the end of KS4.

Again, we start with just the non-FSM children.

For every two non-FSM children who attained at 5+ A\*-C GCSEs (including English and maths), there was still just one non-FSM child who didn't.



## Now for A level.

Again, we start with just the non-FSM students.

For every two non-FSM students who attained at 3+ A\*-A grades were 28 who non FSM students didn't. (3A\*-A grades is not an unusual requirement for many competitive universities and courses)



**The corresponding figure for FSM students is 560.**

It is extremely rare to hear of FSM students to achieve the grades necessary to compete for the most selective universities and professions.

In 2014 just 6 FSM students achieved 3A\*-A grades – 1 more than in 2012.

## Standards and expectations

*"Some say it is unfair to hold disadvantaged children to rigorous standards. I say it is discrimination to require anything less - the soft bigotry of low expectations"*

George W. Bush

*"Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't, you're right."*

Henry Ford

# Why it can't be done

The expectations of disadvantaged children and their families are too low—they don't have the ambition that better-off families do.

We've tried everything, but we're pushing against a culture that won't engage with us. We can't change what goes on inside their homes.

The children have had nothing but intervention—they're sick and tired of it, and it's not working.

Schools cannot address all society's ills.