



Fair  
Education  
Alliance



# REPORT CARD 2015

Founding Corporate  
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ALLEN & OVERY



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## OUR VISION

The Fair Education Alliance is **working towards a world where our education system is fair** – where children’s educational success is not limited by their socio-economic background.

This is a world where **disadvantage no longer determines literacy and numeracy** rates at primary school, **GCSE attainment** at secondary school, the emotional **wellbeing and resilience** of young people, participation in **further education** or employment based training and **university graduation**.

## OUR MISSION

To use our **collective voice and influence** to **create change** by helping a wide range of stakeholders to **close the gap** between the most disadvantaged children and their wealthier peers.

### Acknowledgements:

Sir Richard Lambert, FEA Chair

Dame Julia Cleverdon, FEA Vice Chair

Lewis Iwu, FEA Director

Alex Turner, FEA Coordinator

Catherine Knowles, Report Card Author

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### With thanks to:

Founding FEA Corporate Supporter and Lead Sponsor UBS, and to FEA Member Allen & Overy, for kindly sponsoring this report.

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# Foreword

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It can be done. This latest Report Card from the Fair Education Alliance shows that some schools and some regions of the country really are succeeding in delivering a high and rising quality education for young people, irrespective of their social and economic background. This objective is the driving force behind all the members of the Alliance,

and these achievements are something to celebrate. More parents who can afford to make the choice are now choosing to send their children to state schools, many more of which are featuring in the lists of the nation's top performers.

But the big picture is still much too patchy. Progress is uneven, and in some cases non-existent. And the Report Card shows that inequality is not just the result of income differentials. There is also a geographic divide between good and bad outcomes.

On the current trajectory, the targets that we have set for reducing inequality in the school and higher education system by 2022 will not be achieved. That would leave another generation of young people condemned to second-class schooling through no fault of their own. So we have to redouble our efforts.

Taken together, the membership of the Fair Education Alliance influences a very wide section of the education system and from many different angles. This Report Card represents both a collective effort – it has been put together in close consultation with the members – and a collective commitment. The aim is to accelerate progress towards the common goal in a number of different ways – by convening action to focus on specific areas of activity; by raising awareness and sharing good practice as widely as possible; and by seeking to influence the policymakers.

We don't want to try to boil the ocean. So we have decided to focus on four strategic priorities where we believe that concerted and determined action could lead to measurable progress over the next 18 months.

These are:

- » Early Years, where no child should be left behind. We will support the work of Save the Children and ROGO (Read On Get On) to improve early years provision. We believe we can make progress by raising awareness of the importance of a good start, and by championing policy change.
- » The quality of teaching and leadership is what brings about progress across the system. Our goal is to ensure that all schools have exposure to and understanding of those examples of best practice that have transformed the performance of schools even in the toughest circumstances.
- » Quality careers guidance can have a big impact on the choices young people make at critical moments in their life. This is especially true for the most disadvantaged students. We will work together to ensure that children fully understand the pathways that are open to them.
- » The ability to measure progress is vitally important, and a real challenge at a time when changes are being made to key assessments at school entry, at the end of primary, and at GCSE and A level. We will also focus on creating consensus on an approach to tracking wellbeing and resilience.

And we will not just be going after the easier options. Members of the Alliance are determined to strain every sinew in the most challenging parts of the land – those places where aspirations and expectations of academic success are at their lowest. Only in that way can we achieve the fair and improving academic outcomes that everyone is looking for.

This Report Card is a call to action. It's also a call for help. We are looking for the innovative ideas, practical support and continued commitment that will give all young people the life chances that they and the country need. Warmest thanks to all those who have helped in the process so far.

There is a lot more to be done.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Lambert".

**Sir Richard Lambert**  
Chair of the Fair Education Alliance

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# Executive summary

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## Primary school attainment

### Impact Goal One: Narrow the gap in literacy and numeracy at primary school

**The goal:** The Fair Education Alliance is committed to closing the attainment gap between primary schools serving lower income pupils and those serving higher income pupils. The goal is for this gap in reading, writing and maths to be narrowed by 90% by 2022.

**The gap:** According to Alliance measures, this gap is 1.76 points. Although this gap has decreased from 1.94 points in 2010/11 or by 9.1%, it increased slightly by 0.02 points during 2013/14.

## Secondary school attainment

### Impact Goal Two: Narrow the gap in GCSE attainment at secondary school

**The goal:** The Fair Education Alliance is committed to closing the attainment gap between secondary schools serving lower income pupils and those serving higher income pupils. Our goal is to close this gap by 44% by 2022.

**The gap:** According to Alliance measures, this gap is 79 points. In 2013/14, this gap closed by 17.1%. However, these figures should be interpreted with caution. The narrowing is very likely to be due to changes in assessment methods, hindering accurate comparisons.

**Other trends:** Gaps are closing between secondary schools serving low/high income communities in all regions of England. In 2013/14, the North East made the greatest progress in closing this gap.



This gap **widened** by 0.02 points to 1.76 (average point score) in 2013/2014, but has **decreased** from 1.94 points **since 2010/2011**.



The gap in secondary attainment **closed by 17.1%** to 79 points. However, these figures should be interpreted with caution. The narrowing is very likely to be due to changes in assessment methods, hindering accurate comparisons.

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## Wellbeing and resilience

**Impact Goal Three:** Ensure young people develop key strengths, including character, wellbeing and mental health, to support high aspirations

**The goal:** The Fair Education Alliance recognises that this goal underpins all of the impact goals and is committed to ensuring young people develop the character, wellbeing and mental health they need to succeed in life. The Alliance is working with other organisations to develop measurement tools which will allow us to understand this area more.

**The gap:** Over the year, our knowledge and understanding of the area has evolved, moving us closer to the development of measuring tools. Uniting behind a set of these tools will be a strategic priority for the Alliance over the next two years. In the interim, although we cannot quantify change in young people's development of the character, wellbeing and mental health needed to succeed in life, we have a better understanding of the area through developments in policy and research. Last year, permanent and fixed period exclusions were identified as quantitative measures to aid our understanding of the national picture in this area. Across this measure, the gap has increased over the year; children and young people from poor families were more likely than last year to receive a fixed period exclusion or to be permanently excluded when compared to their more affluent peers.

## Further Education

**Impact Goal Four:** Narrow the gap in the proportion of young people taking part in further education or employment-based training after finishing their GCSEs

**The goal:** The Fair Education Alliance wants to see an increase in the number of young people from schools serving low income communities who stay in further education or employment-based training once they have completed Key Stage 4 (KS4). Our goal is for 90% of young people from schools serving low income communities to be in post-16 education or employment-based training by 2022; currently this figure is 84.9%. In light of changes to the participation age, the Alliance will focus on an increase in the number of young people from low income communities who stay in further education or employment-based training once their post-16 education has ended.

**The gap:** According to Alliance measures for 2012/13, the gap between those from schools serving low and high income communities staying in education after KS4 has remained constant at 7 percentage points.



Children and young people from poor families were **more likely than last year to receive a fixed period exclusion or to be permanently excluded** when compared to their more affluent peers.



The gap between those from schools serving low and high income communities staying in education after KS4 has **remained constant at 7 percentage points**.

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## Higher Education

### Impact Goal Five: Narrow the gap in university graduation, including from the 25% most selective universities

**The goal:** The Fair Education Alliance is committed to closing the graduation gap between young people from low income backgrounds and those from high income backgrounds. Our goal is for at least 5,000 more students from low income backgrounds to graduate each year, with 1,600 of these graduating from the most selective universities.

**The gap:** According to Alliance measures, the gap of 17 percentage points (2012/13) between the proportion of students from low income and high income families going on to university has closed by one percentage point.

**Other trends:** This gap is also closing for young people from poor families who were more likely to enter a medium or low tariff university than they were in 2014; the gaps between these young people and their more advantaged peers have closed by 0.2 percentage points and 0.1 percentage points respectively.

This gap, however, is not closing for young people from poor families accessing selective universities. In 2015, the gap between young people from poor families and their more advantaged peers entering a high tariff university increased by 0.1 percentage point. Entry to any university is variable across England; whilst some regions do very well in helping young people from poor families go to university, others underperform compared to the rest of the country.

In 2015, the gap between young people from poor families and their more advantaged peers entering university in the North East and the East Midlands increased by 1 percentage point; this gap for Yorkshire and the Humber remained unchanged. In 2014, the proportion of young people from advantaged families who went to a Russell Group university increased by one percentage point, whilst that of their less advantaged peers remained the same.



The gap between the proportion of pupils from low income and high income families going on to university has **closed by one percentage point**.



The gap between young people from poor families and their more advantaged peers **entering a high tariff university has increased**.

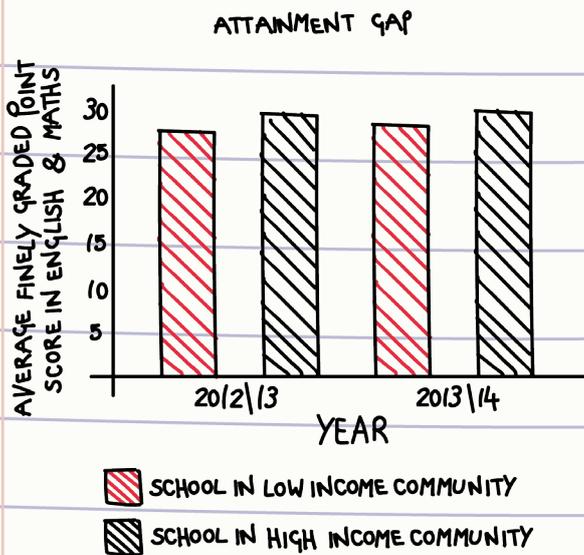


## The Fair Education Impact Goals

# AT A GLANCE...

### IMPACT GOAL ONE

Narrow the gap in literacy and numeracy at primary school



In 2013/2014, 11 year olds at schools serving low income communities were more likely to be able to read, write and solve a maths problem at the basic level or above than they were in 2012/2013. But so were those at schools serving high income communities, who were more likely to be at this level than they were in 2012/2013.

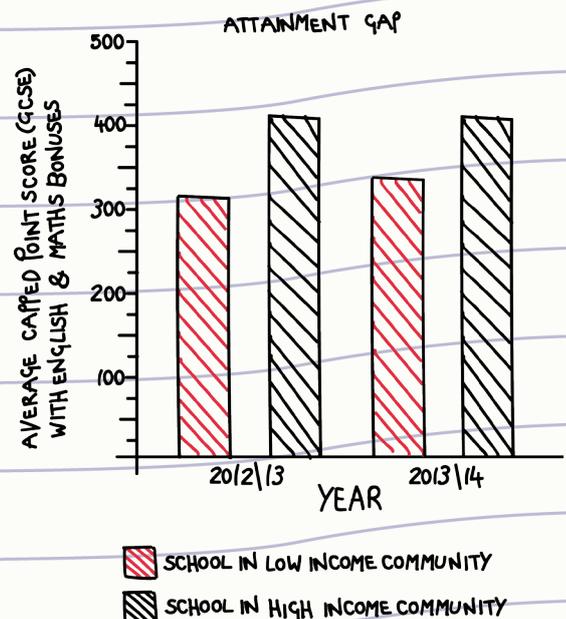
The gap widened by 0.02 points during the year.

### IMPACT GOAL TWO

Narrow the gap in GCSE attainment at secondary school

In 2013/2014, 16 year olds at schools serving low income communities were more likely to achieve higher grades in their GCSEs, including English and maths than they were in 2012/2013.

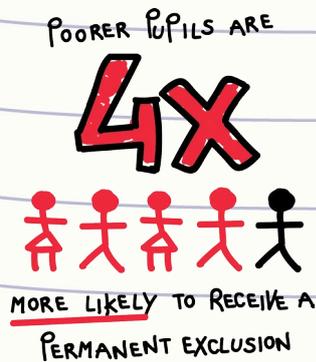
The gap closed by 16 points during the year. However, these figures should be interpreted with caution. The narrowing is very likely to be due to changes in assessment methods, hindering accurate comparisons.



\*According to Alliance measures

### IMPACT GOAL THREE

Ensure young people develop key strengths, including character, wellbeing and mental health to support high aspirations



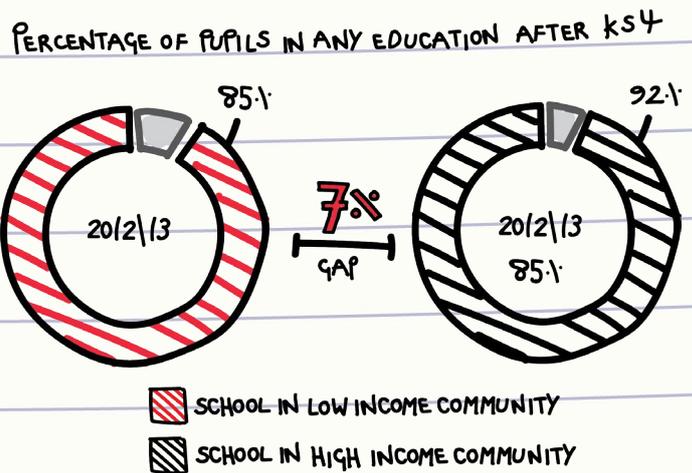
Children and young people from poor families are over 4 times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion than their more advantaged peers and over 3 times more likely to receive a fixed period exclusion.

### IMPACT GOAL FOUR

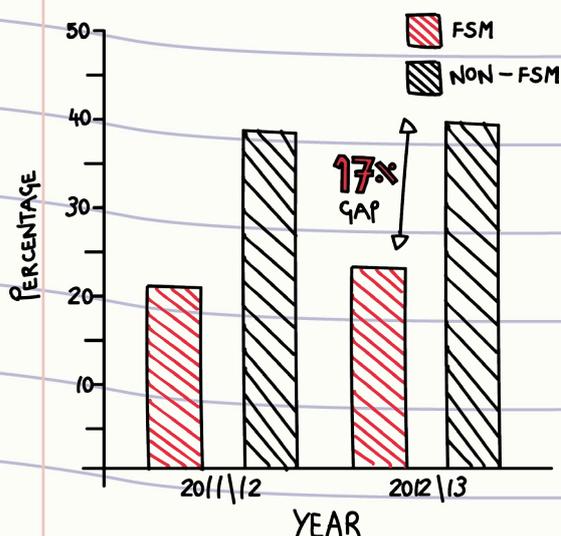
Narrow the gap in the proportion of young people taking part in further education or employment-based training after finishing their GCSEs

In 2012/2013, young people at schools serving low income communities were more likely to remain in any education destination than they were in 2011/2012. But so were those at schools serving young people in high income communities.

The gap between those from schools serving low and high income communities staying in education after KS4 has remained constant at 7 percentage points (2012/13).



### PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS ENTERING UNIVERSITY



### IMPACT GOAL FIVE

Narrow the gap in university graduation, including from the 25% most selective universities

In 2014/2015 young people from low income families were more likely to go to university than in 2013/2014.

The gap between the proportion of pupils from low income and high income families going on to university has closed by one percentage point to 17%. But the gap between young people from poor families and their more advantaged peers entering a high tariff university increased by 0.1 percentage points.

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# Recommendations

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In light of all the evidence, the Alliance puts forward a number of recommendations for government, education practitioners, voluntary organisations and universities. These recommendations are designed to stimulate improvement in areas where performance gaps remain stubbornly high and accelerate change in areas where there are already some signs of improvement.

## Our main recommendations

**Early Years:** Support for the continued development of the childcare and early education workforce should be a top priority. Our long-term ambition is for all group settings to be led by an early years teacher or equivalent, supported by well-qualified staff at all levels. Initially, the government should commit to working with the sector to ensure that every group setting serving the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in England is led by an early years teacher or equivalent by 2020. The government should also use the forthcoming early years workforce strategy to set out how it plans to reverse the decline in early years teacher recruitment; and how it will ensure professional development and progression opportunities are available for everyone working in childcare and early education in England.

**Teacher deployment:** We welcome the pilot of the National Teaching Service and its expansion, should the pilot prove successful. However, the Alliance believes that a strong focus on leadership development will be crucial in making the scheme work. The government should also trial the use of mortgage deposit support as a way of incentivising a long-term commitment to the area. The Alliance also recognises that more work is needed to get more teachers and leaders into the National Teaching Service generally and will collaborate with others to help develop solutions to this capacity problem.

**Character, wellbeing and mental health:** All staff should receive evidence-led professional development and training to enable them to better support the development of these key strengths. This should focus on supporting young people and staff and should be available to staff at all stages of their career.

**Careers guidance:** We would support the development of a scheme placing highly trained advisers in the most disadvantaged schools to guarantee that young people in these schools receive individualised and impartial expert advice and guidance. We believe that the provision of web-based information on its own is not enough to ensure fair access to impartial advice and guidance for all.

**University admissions:** We will work with UCAS to support universities in improving their use of contextualised data. The Alliance supports the efforts made by universities to use such data and would welcome a renewed effort to see where improvements in use can be made.

## Our recommendations for practice

### *Children's centres and schools*

**Sharing of best practice:** Collaborative models of continuing professional development (CPD) should be implemented across networks of early years settings and primary schools to share best practice in numeracy and literacy, including the sharing of specialist teachers; evidence suggests the network model is most effective, whilst at the same time providing economies of scale.

**Language development:** Children's Centres should continue training language development champions to support parents and carers in developing the language of their children, as with the work of I-CAN, the children's communication charity.

**Numeracy development:** There should be a stronger focus on training primary teachers and early years practitioners in early maths development.

**Birth registration:** Children's Centres should offer a service for registering births, so that new parents have a local point of contact with the state and are able to get information about free childcare, as well as other support available before their child is two.

**School clusters:** Every school should be part of a cluster or collaboration of schools; these may include academy chains, federations, cooperatives or any similar structure with strong mutual accountability. There should be a continuing focus on the development and sustainability of collaborative networks of schools to share best practice and resources, as well as staff.

**Whole-school approach to developing character, wellbeing and mental health:** Schools should develop a whole-school, integrated approach to the character development of pupils, including a focus on social and emotional skills and good mental health for both children and staff. Schools should also continue to develop and embed whole-school CPD programmes focused on increasing aspirations (pupil, teacher, headteacher, parents and carers and other staff) and improving access and achievement for all pupils. CPD should be monitored and evaluated in the context of pupil outcomes; this can be effectively supported through charities like the Teacher Development Trust.

**Parental engagement:** Schools should develop a whole-school approach to engaging parents and carers in their children's learning and development, providing staff with training and support for working with parents and carers. This will increase the impact of their work with charities and other third-sector organisations to develop and embed parent and carer engagement in schools. This approach is reflected in the successful Achievement for All schools programme and government-funded family learning programmes. Parent and carer engagement is a neglected aspect of secondary education.

**Career development:** Senior school leaders, supported by named middle leaders with front-line visibility, should lead and develop a whole-school approach to student career development, building strong long-term partnerships with one or two key businesses. Evidence suggests that fewer, stronger school-business partnerships work best. This should begin at primary school. Senior leaders (supported by third-sector organisations) should also develop good tracking and monitoring systems to evaluate employer engagement activities and student destination data.

**Higher education:** Schools should broaden and widen their CPD programme for teachers (at Key Stages 3-5), ensuring all teachers have the knowledge and understanding to play their part in providing opportunities for students to benefit from HE. The CPD programme needs to be focused on aspiration, access and achievement and may be more effective when supported by third-sector organisations.

### ***Charities and the third sector***

Charities should expand character development and support for wellbeing and mental health, as exemplified by the work of Family Links, Place2Be and ReachOut.

Third-sector organisations providing enrichment opportunities should expand and target schools serving low income communities, as exemplified by the work of Step up to Serve and Debate Mate; educational technology organisations like Performance in Context support schools in identifying a young person's talents.

### ***Universities***

Universities should continue to broaden their more successful outreach programmes, including summer schools, campus visits and mentoring. Universities should consider how to target this work based on need, taking account of regional factors and the characteristics of potential students.

### ***Business and careers***

The Alliance supports the creation of the Careers and Enterprise Company and welcomes its plans to develop an Enterprise Passport. We believe that its focus should be on measuring progression and distance travelled. Crucially, the Passport should be developed in close conjunction with employers in order to ensure it meets their needs and is recognised in their recruitment practices.

Businesses should integrate youth social action into their recruitment processes. This both demonstrates to young people that social action is worthwhile in terms of helping them to develop key skills valued by employers and allows employers to identify those individuals with improved work and life skills.

Businesses should not reinvent the wheel but come together with other employers and employees, including third sector organisations, to share their content and platforms widely. We believe that this can help the government achieve its aim of creating a new generation of mentors to help young people fulfil their potential and improve their life chances.

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# Impact Goal One

## Narrow the gap in literacy and numeracy at primary school

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### The gap

The Fair Education Alliance is committed to closing the attainment gap between primary schools serving lower income pupils and those serving higher income pupils. The goal is for this gap in reading, writing and maths to be narrowed by 90% by 2022. This gap stands at 1.76 points. Although it has closed from 1.94 points in 2010/11 (or by 9.1%), in 2013/14 it widened slightly by 0.02 points.

### The national picture

#### *Primary school*

In 2013/14, pupils at primary schools serving low income communities were better served by their schools than they were in 2010/11. The attainment gap between schools in low/high income communities narrowed from 1.94 points in 2010/11 to 1.76 points, or by 9.1%. Although, this decrease over the three-year period is promising, in 2013/14 the attainment gap widened slightly by 0.02 points.

#### *Early years foundation stage*

Children begin school at the age of four or five with considerable differences in English and maths skills. In 2014/15, 34% of children from poor families failed to achieve at least the expected level in numeracy at the end of the early years foundation stage (EYFS). This compared to 19% for their more advantaged peers. For literacy, the picture was even more concerning. Over 2 in 5 children from low income families failed to achieve at least the expected level at age five, in comparison to 1 in 4 of their more affluent peers. In addition, children from poor families were less likely to achieve at least the expected level in communication and language at age 5 than their more affluent peers; in 2015, the proportion of children from poor families in this category was almost two times that of their more affluent peers.

This situation is not inevitable. Evidence shows that young children benefit from quality, age-appropriate, teaching and learning activities during early years education.

Primary schools that are successful in closing the gap for their most disadvantaged pupils focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, along with support for attendance, behaviour, confidence building and resilience.

There is a lot more work to do in order to achieve this Impact Goal by 2022. Changes in the way the government measures success at KS2 – with levels removed and scaled scores replacing average points score (APS) – will complicate comparison over time. Additionally, schools are developing their own measures to monitor pupil progress, with descriptions of a ‘national standard’ for the end of each key stage which will be used to estimate an ‘end point’ in this progress. The new system is focused on formative assessment, which is expected to provide better evaluation and feedback, enabling pupils to know where improvement is needed and how to achieve it.

### The regional picture

The regional picture shows that the gaps in attainment at the end of EYFS (Map 1.1) for children from poor families are closing. However, children in some regions do better than others. At the end of EYFS, children from poor families in the South West of England are least likely to achieve a good level of development compared to their more advantaged peers.

At school level (map 1.2), children at schools in low income communities in the North East and London attain more highly than children at such schools in other regions of England; this is reflected in their higher average point scores. The smallest gaps between schools in low and high income communities are in the East of England, the North West and the West Midlands. The biggest gaps are in the South East and Yorkshire and the Humber, although overall the variation between regions is small.

However, it still remains the case that areas with higher levels of poverty are better at supporting their most disadvantaged children. This may be because, with a higher proportion of children from poor families, there is a more focused approach to their learning needs.



Over **2 in 5** children from poor families fail to achieve at least the expected level in literacy at age 5.

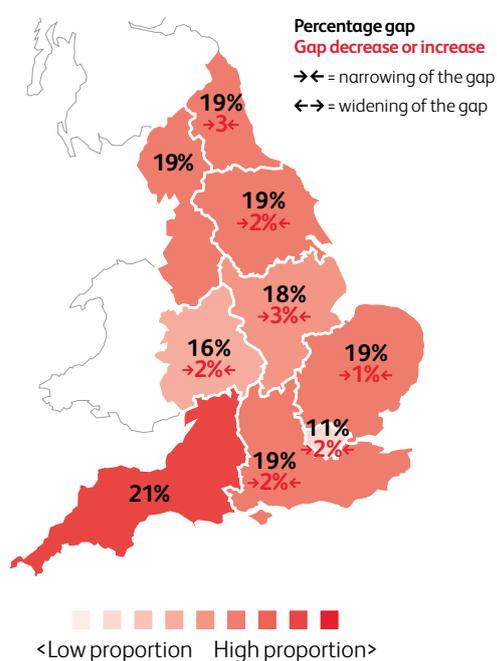
# 3 in 10

In 2015, more than **3 in 10** children from poor families could not read, write or solve a maths problem at the basic level expected by the end of primary school.



Children in the **North East** and **London** are **served better by schools in low income communities** than children at these schools in other regions of England.

**Figure 1.1:** Gap in children achieving a ‘good level of development’ at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in 2013/14

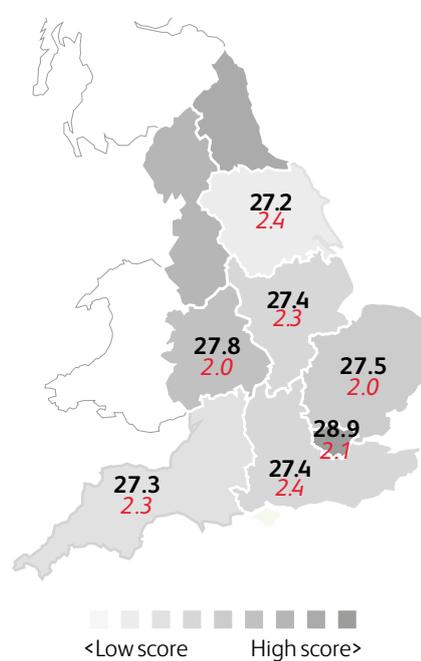


(Figures on the map show the attainment gaps between children from poor families and their more affluent peers and the extent to which the gaps have closed since 2012/13)

## Closing the gap

Since 2010/11, some progress has been made at the national level in closing the attainment gaps between children at schools in low/high income communities. However, the regional picture shows more discrepancy. It highlights local authority areas where children at schools in low income communities are being let down by the education system; this is particularly acute in rural and coastal districts and areas with a relatively small proportion of children from poor families. In order to break this pattern of underachievement for some of the most disadvantaged children in England, the Alliance has identified the following

**Figure 1.2:** Average points score for primary schools serving low income areas, with average point score gap between primary schools serving high income areas in 2013/14



four key areas where greater focus is required during the early years of education and through primary school: the role of parents, quality early years education, quality teaching and learning, and school leadership (see [www.faireducation.org.uk](http://www.faireducation.org.uk) for a more in-depth analysis of these areas).

Evidence shows that young children **benefit from quality, age-appropriate teaching and learning** activities during Early Years education.

# Impact Goal Two

## Narrow the gap in GCSE attainment at secondary school

### The gap

The Fair Education Alliance is committed to closing the attainment gap between secondary schools serving lower income pupils and those serving higher income pupils. Our goal is to close this gap by 44% by 2022. According to Alliance measures, this gap stands at 79 points. It has narrowed over the last three years from 104 points in 2011 (or by 24%); during the last year, this gap closed by 16 points. However, these figures should be interpreted with caution. The narrowing is very likely to be due to changes in assessment methods, hindering accurate comparisons.

### The national picture

In 2013/14, the attainment gap between schools in low income communities and those in high income communities decreased by 17.1%. This suggests that secondary schools serving low income communities have got better at raising the attainment of their pupils (subject to the caveat over changes in assessment methods). The analysis of primary school data has shown that pupils from high income backgrounds are more likely to enter secondary school with high prior attainment. This means that the difficulty in closing this gap is inextricably linked to prior attainment.

Since 2014, the government has assessed progress (instead of attainment) across eight GCSE subjects, to reduce the tendency of some schools to focus on the 'boundary grade' of a C and encourage them instead to push all pupils to the highest level they can reach across a range of subjects. The new grading system is more finely graded for the highest attainers (where there was one A\* GCSE grade, there will now be a Grade 8 and a higher Grade 9). Conversely, the new system will measure progress at the bottom end of attainment with less precision (where there were two GCSE grades F and G, there will now only be one, Grade 1).

### The regional picture

**Figure 2.1: Gap in average point score between schools serving low/high income communities and the extent to which the gap in average point score has closed during 2013/14**

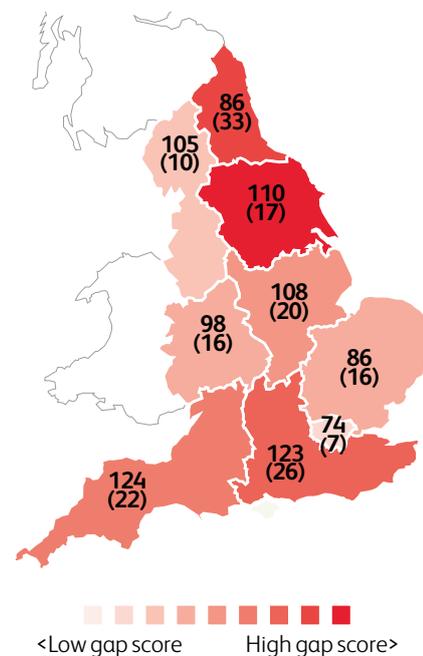
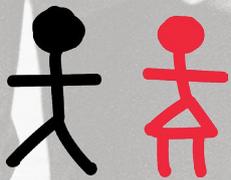


Figure 2.1 shows that the attainment gap for all regions in England in 2013/14 is closing. As the map shows, the biggest decrease was in the North East, where the gap in average capped point score closed by 33 points since last year and 40 points since 2012; this is equivalent to a grade C GCSE pass. This is promising, given that three out of the nine local authority areas where fewer than 50% of secondary school pupils are in a good or outstanding school are in the North East of England. The more affluent South East still has the second biggest gap across the country (123 points). The gap decreased the least in London, where it reduced by 7 points during the year. However, the gap in London was still the lowest overall, at 87 points in 2011/12 and 74 points in 2013/14; this is approximately equivalent to 2 GCSE C grade passes.



Less than **1 in 2** young people from poor families go on to make the expected progress in maths at secondary school.

## Post-16

Poorer pupils are much **more likely to leave school without the necessary skills in English and maths** and the qualifications they need to access post-16 employment.



In 2014, almost **50% more young people from poor families in inner London achieved 5 A\*-C GCSEs** than other regions of England.

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## Closing the gap

Both the national and regional pictures are showing more promising achievement trajectories for 16-year-olds who attend schools in low income communities. Demography does not determine destiny in every part of the country. A closer look at the regional picture shows that schools in some areas serve their poorest pupils better than others. Young people from poor families in London perform better at 16 than those anywhere else in the country. In 2014, almost 50% more young people from poor families in inner London achieved 5 A\*-C GCSEs than in other regions of England.

The Alliance has identified key areas where greater focus is needed during secondary education to close the attainment gap for young people from poor families and/or those attending schools in low income communities. These include developing quality teaching and learning across all secondary schools and developing leadership. These areas should also be considered alongside the themes identified across Impact Goal 3 (please visit [www.faireducation.org.uk](http://www.faireducation.org.uk) for more information).

Once at secondary school,  
**many young people  
from low income families  
make little or no progress.**

For these gaps to close  
they would need to make  
accelerated progress  
simply to catch up;  
**this won't be the case.**

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# Impact Goal Three

Ensure young people develop key strengths, including character, wellbeing and mental health, to support high aspirations

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## The gap

In the absence of significant measuring tools, we cannot reliably quantify changes over the year in the development of the key strengths (character, wellbeing and mental health) that young people need to succeed in life. Last year, permanent and fixed-period exclusions were identified as quantitative measures to provide the Alliance with some understanding of this area. Across these measures, the gap has increased over the year; children and young people from poor families were more likely than last year to receive a fixed-period exclusion or to be permanently excluded compared to their more affluent peers. However, over the year, our knowledge and understanding of the area has evolved, primarily through developments in policy and research, moving us closer to the development of measuring tools. Furthermore, we have identified the following areas where progress has been made in raising the profile of this Impact Goal:

- » Development of key strengths, including character, wellbeing and mental health, is now a key priority for government.
- » There is a stronger movement towards the development of a common language and definition around this area; prominent concepts now include character, social and emotional skills, mental health and wellbeing.
- » More schools across England are focusing on the development of pupil character, social and emotional skills and mental health and wellbeing; support for schools was affirmed as a Department for Education strategy in the recent White Paper, *Educational Excellence Everywhere*.
- » There is increasing acknowledgement that character and social and emotional skills can be taught and that children from poor families stand to benefit most.
- » There is increasing recognition of the importance of parental engagement in children's learning for their social and emotional development.

## The national picture

2015 has seen a renewed political interest in children and young people's development of key strengths, including character, wellbeing and mental health.

These are often presented under the umbrella term of 'character'. This interest is mirrored by developments in education and industry. In December 2014, the Secretary of State for Education announced the Character Awards, making £3.5 million grant funding available for schools committed to developing attributes and behaviours in children and young people that underpin and promote their academic and longer term success; collectively, these were referred to as 'character'. Further funding was also made available for military ethos projects and youth social action projects. Concurrently, funding to develop the evidence base was granted to the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

By the beginning of 2015, character development had become an educational priority for the Department for Education. In the same year, the Confederation of British Industry and major employers called on schools to address the shortfall in young people's 'work skills'. Although the last year has not brought a clearly defined set of 'key strengths', the development of which supports high aspirations, it has brought a sharper focus to their place within education and to how they might be defined. Publication of 'good practice' examples from award-winning 'character development' schools and clubs, evidence-based approaches from the EEF and examples from schools and colleges developing youth social action have clearly illustrated how schools can address children's character development and wellbeing.

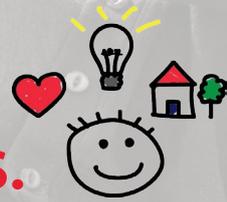
Research and policy documents alike show inconsistencies in terminology and understanding; 'non-cognitive skills', 'soft skills', 'social and emotional skills' and more recently 'character' are often used interchangeably to describe the key strengths which underpin educational achievement. There is clearly some consensus on the types of attributes that need to be developed in children and young people, even if the terms vary and definitions are imprecise.



Children and young people from poor families were **more likely** than last year to **receive a fixed-period exclusion** or to be permanently excluded than their more affluent peers.



VS.



Findings show that children from poor families are still **more likely** to have **poorly developed social and emotional skills** and are **less likely to display** the particular **positive behavioural skills** needed for engagement in learning.

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In exploring the extent to which the gaps have changed this year, we have considered the issues addressed in last year's Report Card and addressed them where data are available; other themes have been identified in the policy and research base in 2015. Some of these themes are considered in this chapter.

### *Social and emotional skills*

Overall findings showed that children from poor families are still more likely to have poorly developed social and emotional skills and are less likely to display the particular positive behavioural skills needed for engagement in learning. Conscientiousness and belief at the age of 10 that one's actions matter are closely linked to success in accessing top jobs later on in life; for children from non-professional families, this can account for 10% of the higher likelihood of achieving a top job.

The gap for both permanent and fixed-period exclusions widened during the year. Children and young people from poor families are over four times more likely to receive a permanent exclusion than their more advantaged peers and over three times more likely to receive a fixed-period exclusion. Children and young people from poor families are less likely to develop positive behaviours in their home environment and are therefore more likely to benefit from in-school or beyond-school programmes.

### *Mental health*

Although reporting in the media of mental health issues in children and young people has become more common, the actual evidence for increased anxiety, depression or stress in this age group is inconclusive. This is partly due to the lack of up-to-date published data, an issue which is now being addressed. One report in 2015 indicated that 290,000 children and young people had a diagnosed anxiety disorder, with one in three of these being under 10 years of age. More positively, recent findings from the Behavioural Insights Team found that young people who participate in social action have reduced levels of anxiety. Another positive example is the Family Links' Nurturing Schools Network which provides a whole-community approach to social and emotional wellbeing, including professional development for teachers, social and emotional learning curriculum resources and a range of parenting and family support programmes.

### *In-school support*

Learning from research published during the year points towards the value of a whole-school approach to the development of social and emotional skills or character. A recent survey suggests that a relatively high proportion of schools already have this in place (involving 54% of secondary school teachers and 80% of primary teachers); other research suggests that provision can be piecemeal both in school and across schools. In schools with a strong emphasis on character development, there is often a key teacher dedicated to the area across the school. In such schools, teachers feel empowered to move away from the standard curriculum, with flexibility to do so, and freely discuss related issues with pupils. Leadership (particularly from the senior leadership team) is an important factor in developing a whole-school approach.

### *Beyond school*

The provision of enrichment activities by third-sector organisations has increased as local authority involvement with schools and other places of education has been reduced. The provision of such activities for young people is more diverse than ever before, with the development of children and young people's social and emotional skills seen as a central feature of these endeavours. The benefits for young people include working with supportive adults and developing friendships outside of school.

ReachOut, a charity offering one-to-one mentoring to young people from disadvantaged communities in London and Manchester, effectively provides academic support and character education to help young people get a better start in life and go on to achieve their future goals. Additionally, a number of projects in the past year have been successful in inspiring young people to serve their community, the Step Up to Serve's cross-sector #iwill campaign being a good example of this. For young people, participation in social action is associated with positive levels of wellbeing. However, involvement in social action varies across England; young people from higher income families or those living in less deprived communities are still more likely to participate than their more disadvantaged peers.

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## Closing the gap

The national conversation on character has moved nearer to achieving a common language, a working definition and a means of measuring key strengths, including character, wellbeing and mental health. This has been supported in part by the Department for Education's identification of the key strengths, or 'traits, attributes and behaviours that underpin success in school and work', and that contribute to the development of 'character'. These include: perseverance, resilience and grit; confidence and optimism; motivation, drive and ambition; neighbourliness and community spirit; tolerance and respect; honesty, integrity and dignity and conscientiousness, curiosity and focus. In part, it has been supported by research exploring the origins, meaning and development of 'character' in practice and its associated areas. The research is clear: 'character' can be taught.

The Alliance has identified areas where more work needs to be done to close the gap during school and beyond. These include developing quality Early Years education and developing parental engagement in children's learning (please visit [www.faireducation.org](http://www.faireducation.org) for more information).

Children and young people from poor families are **less likely to develop positive behaviours in their home** environment and are more likely to benefit from in-school or beyond-school programmes.

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# Impact Goal Four

## Narrow the gap in the proportion of young people taking part in further education or employment based training after finishing their GCSEs

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### The gap

According to Alliance measures for 2012/13, the gap between those from schools serving low and high income communities staying in education after KS4 has remained constant at 7 percentage points. At the same time, the gap between individual poorer and more affluent students has narrowed by one percentage point.

### The national picture

In 2013/14, 82% of students from poor families remained in education (sustained destination) after KS4, in comparison to 92% of all other pupils; this gap has closed by one percentage point since the last Report Card (2014). At the same time, 71.5% of all 16-18 year olds were in full-time education; with a 1.6 percentage point increase, full-time education showed the biggest increase among last year's post-16 destinations. The increase was most marked for 17 year olds, with a 2.8% increase in participation in full-time education; this is to be expected, given that they were the first cohort obliged to stay in education or training post-16.

Those in work-based learning increased by 0.6% to 6.5%, whilst those in part-time education decreased by 1.2% to 4.2%. Between 2013 and 2014, there was a 1.3 percentage point increase in the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds studying GCSEs as their highest qualification, with the biggest increase (2.2 percentage points) being among 16 year olds; this is attributed to the new attainment requirements for English and maths post-16. However only 9% of students who re-took maths and English GCSE post-16 achieved an A\*-C grade by the age of 19. The GCSE route is not necessarily the right path for many young people post-16; a route developing functional skills in maths and English, which is currently under review, may provide a more rewarding and effective path.

Despite the promising increases in education, employment and training of 16-18 year olds across England, caution is needed when considering sustainability. After KS4, over 20% of young people attending Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) do

not maintain their chosen path and become NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training); this compares to just 2% from mainstream state-funded schools. Many of those in PRUs are from poor families.

Over the last four years, the number of 16-18 year olds who are NEET has decreased significantly. Over the last year, the proportion of 16-18 year olds identified as NEET decreased by 0.3 percentage points to 7.3%. Although this is the lowest level since records began in 1994, it is still more than double the best performing OECD countries where those not in education, employment or training account for approximately 3% of the younger population (15-19 years). In England, there are still over 141,000 young people not in education, employment or training. There are a number of reasons for the recent decrease in the proportion of NEETs, including economic recovery, the creation of jobs and in particular the raised participation age of 18 years.

Schools in high income communities have a higher level of pupils participating in apprenticeships (4.8%) than schools serving low income communities (4.7%). This is different to previous years, where schools serving poorer communities had a higher proportion of pupils participating in apprenticeships.

However, overall this analysis shows an improving national picture for young people from poor families and/or communities. Those from poor families were less likely to be NEET than they were last year (just over half as likely); additionally, the gap between these young people and their wealthier peers has narrowed. Access gaps to further education or employment-based training after GCSEs still persist but are closing. Although young people from poor families are less likely than their wealthier peers to sustain a training course or a job for more than two terms, this gap has narrowed since last year's Report Card (2014). In addition, young people from poor families are more likely to stay in further education after GCSEs than they were in the previous year. In 2012/13, 80% (77% in 2011/12) of young people from poor families remained in further education; this compared to 90% (88% in 2011/12) of their wealthier counterparts. Data for 2013/14 show this gap has remained unchanged.



Schools serving high income communities have a **higher proportion** of young people **participating in apprenticeships** than those serving low income communities.

**x2**

Young people from poor families are **twice as likely** to be **NEET** than their more affluent peers.



Over **18%** of young people attending Pupil Referral Units **do not sustain their chosen path** post 16 and become NEET.

Although students from poor families are still more likely than their better-off peers to retake maths and English GCSEs, or the equivalent level 2 qualification, and also more likely to attend colleges of further education than sixth form colleges, this overall gap has closed by two percentage points.

## The regional picture

Figure 4.1 shows regional changes in the post-16 progression gap (to any education destination) of young people who attend schools in low income communities and those who attend schools in high income communities. This year the gap has closed in all regions except the North West, the West Midlands and London, where the gap was smaller to start with. However, young people at schools in poor London communities are still more likely to go on to any education destination than those elsewhere in England; the gap is only 4 percentage points lower than for those at schools in high income London communities. The biggest gap in progression of young people attending schools in poor/rich communities was in the South West.

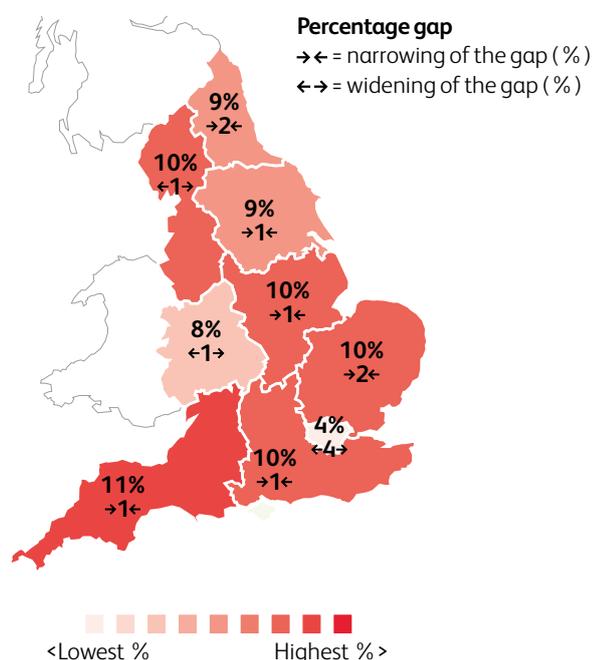
The findings suggest that young people at schools in low income communities, particularly in the East Midlands, East of England, the North West, the South East and the South West, may have poor access to further education.

## Closing the gap

The analysis has highlighted both regional variation in the provision of opportunity and the high number of young people who are already disengaged by the age of 16; some lack awareness of the skills needed or the means to pursue further education, employment or training.

Recently, there has been a move towards early intervention and prevention, highlighting key areas where further work is needed to engage 'at risk' young people. This includes engagement with employers and work experience and access to good apprenticeships post-16. However, young people from poor families are less likely to have the home support needed to sustain post-16 opportunities and are

**Figure 4.1: Gap in percentage of young people from low/high income communities in any education destination post-16 (2012/13)**



(Figures on map with arrows show the change in the size of the gap between schools serving high income communities and schools serving low income communities over the last year)

more likely to disengage from their path than their more affluent peers. This presents key challenges for schools; for young people from poor families it is not only a question of post-16 access, but also of long term participation and engagement. There is some evidence to suggest that youth participation in social action increases the development of the skills required by many employers. The Alliance has identified areas where work can be done to improve the long-term trajectories of young people from poor families. These include developing quality teaching and learning, providing good independent careers advice, developing parental engagement and developing links with employers (please visit [www.faireducation.org.uk](http://www.faireducation.org.uk) for more information).

In England, there are still over **141,000** young people **not in education, employment or training.**

However, over the last four years this number has **decreased significantly.**

# Impact Goal Five

## Narrow the gap in university graduation, including from the 25% most selective universities

### The gap

According to Alliance measures, the gap of 17% between the proportion of pupils from low income and high income families going on to university has closed by one percentage point.

### The national picture

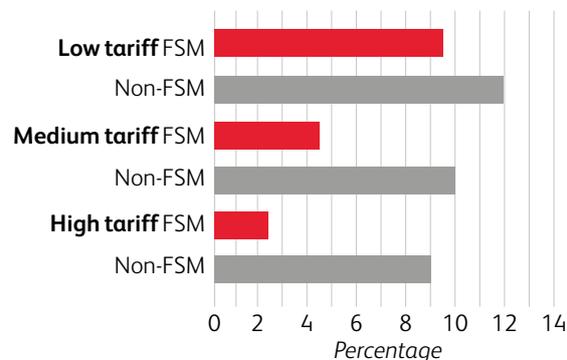
The proportion of pupils from poor families entering university has increased each year since 2004 when 13% went on to higher education, but so has the proportion of more advantaged young people, and the gap between the two groups remained at 18% for the previous five years. However, data for 2012/13 shows this gap is now closing, with 23% of young people from poor families entering higher education in comparison to 40% of their better-off peers. Only 7% of the UK population attend fee-paying schools, yet 85% of all A Level students at these schools progressed to higher education in 2012/13, compared to 63% attending non-selective state schools. In addition, young people from independent schools were three times more likely to attend a high tariff university than their peers at non-selective state schools; this gap has widened over the last three years.

An examination of university entry rates for 18 year olds by low/high income areas also shows an increase of young people from low income areas; in 2015, these young people were 0.7 percentage points more likely to enter higher education than in the previous year. Although young people in higher income areas are still more likely to enter university than those living in low income areas, this gap is closing. In 2014, young people from less affluent areas were 2.5 times less likely to enter university than their peers in more advantaged communities, a decrease from 2.8 times in 2013. In 2015, this ratio decreased again to 2.4 times. However, attention should also be paid to multiple equality dimensions. Young people from the most disadvantaged quintile on all measures were only 0.3 percentage points more likely to enter university in 2015 than in 2014. This compared to 1.1 percentage points for their more advantaged peers. On this multiple dimension measure, the most disadvantaged group are the least likely to go to

university and their position has improved the least. The entry ratio for this measure remained at 3.2 in 2015, which means the gap has stayed the same.

These figures should also be viewed in the context of the changing qualifications landscape. In 2015, more 18 year olds than ever before entered university holding only BTECs as their main qualification; since 2010 the number in this group has increased at a faster rate than that of those entering with only A Levels as their main qualification. Although this increased across all high and low POLAR 3 participation areas in the last year, the highest increases were in low participation areas.

**Figure 5.1: 18 year old entry rates in 2015 for pupils from state maintained education institutions**



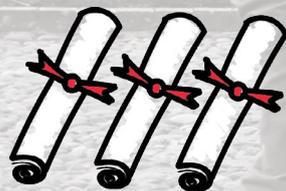
However, the figures for those entering the most selective universities are less encouraging. In 2012/13, 19% of young people from poor families went on to a less selective university, compared to 28% of their better-off peers, but young people from this background were three times less likely to study at a selective university than their more affluent peers.

In 2015, as figure 5.1 shows, young people from poor families were more than three times less likely to go to a high tariff university than their more advantaged peers. Although this gap has increased only slightly during the year (by 0.1%), over the last three years it has widened by 0.4%, whilst the gap has been closing over the past three years for young people from poor families attending medium (0.2%) and low (0.3%) tariff universities. These access gaps remain stubbornly high.



**23%**

of young people from poor families **enter higher education in comparison to 40%** of their better off peers.

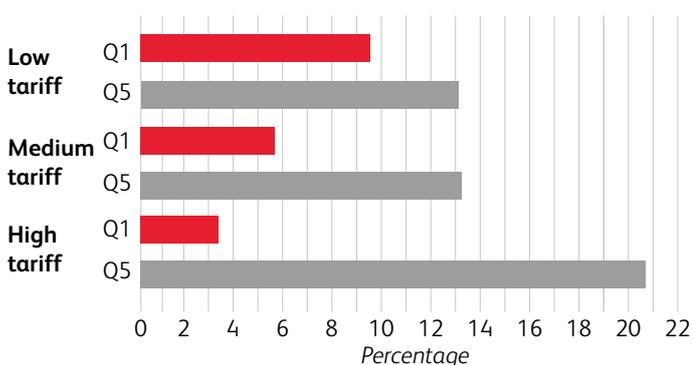


In 2015, young people from poor families **were more than three times less likely to go to a high tariff university** than their more advantaged peers.



For young people from poor families who do succeed at school, **some can lack the means to realise their aspirations.**

**Figure 5.2: Entry rate to university by advantaged/disadvantaged area of England**



(Q1 is the POLAR3 Quintile classification for areas with the lowest young participation in HE (most disadvantaged) and Q5 classifies areas with the highest rates (most advantaged))

Figure 5.2 shows that young people living in the most advantaged communities are over six times more likely to go to a high tariff university than their peers living in the most disadvantaged communities. In other words, just over one in five from the most advantaged group went to a high tariff university, in comparison to one in 30 from the most disadvantaged. Since 2011, the entry rate for the most advantaged has increased by 2.8 percentage points, whilst that for those living in the least advantaged areas grew by only 0.9 percentage points.

### The regional picture

The national picture is promising, with more young people from poor families going on to university overall. However, the regional picture is variable. In the South East, the South West, the North East and the East Midlands, only 15% of all young people who were claiming free school meals at age 15 went on to higher education. This compared with inner London where 41% of young people in this group took up a place at a university. There are many factors contributing to the continuing success of London but prior attainment at KS2 and KS4 is critically linked.

**Figure 5.3: Percentage gap between poorer state school pupils and their more affluent peers going to higher education at age 19 (2012/13)**

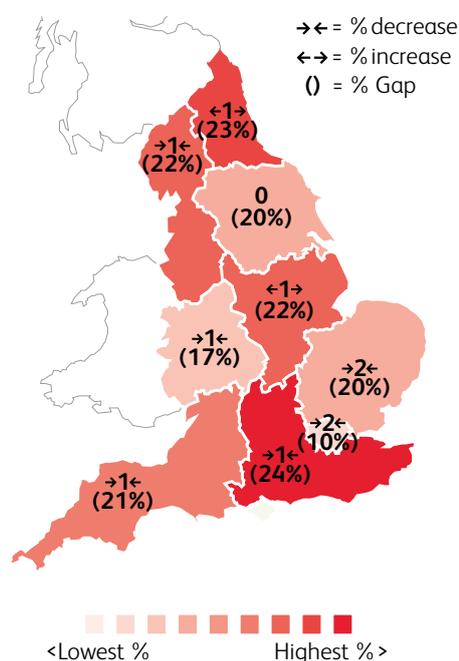


Figure 5.3 shows the variability across England of young people's chances of gaining access to higher education. In 2013, young people from poor families in London were more likely than those from poor families in any other part of England to go to university. In the North East, the South East, the West and the East Midlands, young people from poor families were over two and a half times less likely to access higher education than those from poor families in inner London. Although these gaps have closed by 1 percentage point in the South East and South West, they still remain too high. Entry to university across low income areas of England stands at approximately 20% of the young population; this compares to an entry rate of 60% for those in more advantaged areas.

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The chances for young people from poor families of entering a Russell Group university are also very low; they are almost two and half times less likely to do so than are their more affluent peers; this gap has widened by 1 percentage point since last year. In the South East, they are four times less likely than their more affluent peers to enter a Russell Group University; this is the highest gap across England.

It is also the case that entrants from areas of low participation are also more likely to drop out after their first year at university than are those in high participation areas. Those from schools serving low income communities who went to a Russell Group university in 2009/10 were over 1.5 times more likely to leave their course after the first or second year than their peers from schools serving high income communities.

### Closing the gap

Low attainment throughout school is a key determinant of future trajectories. As this report has shown, low attainment at each phase of education is more prevalent amongst young people from poor families. Even where such young people do succeed at school, some lack the means to realise their aspirations; this is perhaps reflected in the smaller proportion of young people from poor families who apply to Russell Group universities. Even with good grades in the right subjects, they are less likely to apply than are their more advantaged peers. This situation is often compounded by poor advice and/or badly completed application forms. However, intervention at the right time can make a big difference to the academic and longer term careers of children and young people.

The Alliance has identified areas where solutions can be found to narrow this gap in higher education. These include developing quality teaching and learning, providing good information advice and support, improving the use of contextualised data and university outreach activities (please visit [www.faireducation.org.uk](http://www.faireducation.org.uk) for more information).

Young people from poor families who do succeed at school can **lack the means to realise their aspirations.** This is reflected in the smaller proportion of young people from poor families who apply to Russell Group universities.

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# Conclusion

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At national level, some progress has been made in closing the gaps for some of the poorest children and young people in England. Despite small overall improvements in outcomes for these young people, progress is uneven and education still remains particularly unfair in some parts of the country. In mapping the education journey of children at schools serving low income communities or those from poor families, a school pattern emerges. Within the same area, poorer children are better served by some schools than others, and in these better schools, they are achieving above expectation. Often underpinning this success are a whole school approach to achievement, enrichment activities, the development of character and high expectations.

The recent economic recovery, job creation and the raised participation age have resulted in fewer young people from poor families being NEET; more of these young people remained in education than they did the previous year. Although the proportion of young people from poor families going to university has increased, they are still less likely than their more affluent peers to go to a selective university.

Achieving 5 GCSEs, including English and maths, at A\*-C provides a strong base for success in life; a young person can also expect higher earnings over their lifetime. Some schools are better at achieving this for their pupils than are others. Looking to the future, automation and the 'fourth industrial revolution' present huge opportunities for the nation. They also pose challenges to the labour market and equality of opportunity. The best response to these challenges is to ensure that our education system leaves no child behind.

This 2015 Report Card has taken a critical look at the evidence against each of the Impact Goals to see how England is performing and the extent to which gaps in achievement have closed. In many areas, the picture is better than it was last year. But there is still a lot more work to be done. For too many children and young people from poor families or low income communities, the pattern of underachievement has not yet been broken.

The Alliance believes that this will change if there is a greater focus on the following areas: quality teaching and learning, parent engagement, early years provision, school leadership, careers advice, links with employers, information, advice and support and university outreach.

## Quality teaching and learning

At the age of five, there is a 19-month gap in school readiness between children from poor and more affluent families. At the same time, evidence shows the positive impact of good quality teaching, which can allow those from low income families to gain the equivalent of a year's learning.

## Parental engagement

There is evidence that 'bright' children from poor backgrounds are less likely to become high earning adults than 'less able' children from more affluent backgrounds. Family background is still a big factor influencing young people's future achievement trajectories. For example, parents who are better off have the means to support their children in developing skills, particularly those valued by employers.

However, it still remains the case that 'what parents do is more important than who parents are'. Often parents want to be involved with their child's education, but lack the knowledge of how to do this in practice; others do not realise they have a part to play in the process. Family learning programmes have been effective in involving parents in their children's learning, including those parents considered the hardest to reach, and have led to better developmental outcomes in children. Home literacy programmes have been particularly effective for younger children (5-7 years) leading to increased reading scores during KS1. In schools and Early Years settings, the engagement of parents and carers in children's learning leads to a better home learning environment, contributing to improved scores for children in English and maths. However, parental engagement needs still greater attention; this is particularly the case in secondary education and beyond.

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## Early Years

Nationally more young children are achieving better outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This pattern of achievement is not consistently reflected at a regional level. Children from poor families who attend an early years setting, particularly those living in low income communities, are less likely than their better-off peers to achieve a good level of development at the age of five. They are more likely to be behind children from more affluent families when they start school and some may never catch up. These children would benefit from continued improvements in the childcare workforce at all levels, including ensuring that every nursery in the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods is led by an early years teacher or equivalent.

## School leadership

Clear, decisive and strong school leadership is an important factor in improving educational outcomes for young people from poor families. Sharing of best practice within school networks is effective in driving this improvement.

## Careers advice

Good careers guidance inspires pupils to further study, enables them to make informed choices and opens their eyes to careers they might not have considered. Additionally, participation in specific guidance programmes or interventions has a positive impact on the transition between KS3 and KS4.

## School links with employers

Business partnerships with schools and colleges are vital if young people are to make successful transitions from education to work. Promisingly, 73% of businesses have such links with schools or colleges. The most common of these were between businesses and secondary schools (55%) and businesses and FE colleges (53%). This reflects the increasing policy focus on successful transition to work for 14-19 year olds. Although this is laudable, it overshadows the place of business links with primary schools, where children first develop ideas and ambitions about work; in 2015, only 24% of businesses reported links with primary schools.

Evidence shows that many high-quality interactions with employers during school, combined with opportunity for feedback, is most beneficial for young people's future transition to work; opportunity for feedback is particularly essential.

## University outreach

University outreach is one of the most effective means of increasing the participation of young people from poor families in higher education. This includes mentoring, residential programmes, tutoring and provision of individualised application information and assistance. A combination of these interventions is needed over a number of years. However, despite the greater prevalence of such activity, very few universities are effectively evaluating their programmes. Better evaluation needs to be a key target going forward; with limited funding, university outreach must focus on 'what works' and what provides value for money.

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# References

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## **Executive Summary**

- <sup>1</sup> The Alliance uses data published by the Department for Education. Historically our analysis used the mean percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths. In 2013, we changed the measurement to use instead the average finely graded points score in English and maths. Levels by themselves are a fairly blunt measure that hide information about real underlying achievement trends; schools have strong incentives to ensure all their pupils reach Level 4. Additionally, it is debatable whether level 4 is an ambitious enough target. Therefore, for the 2013/14 results, we have reported on the average points scores (mean finely graded points scores) for English & maths.
- <sup>2</sup> The Alliance uses data published by the Department for Education. We measure the gap in average points score (APS), where each GCSE grade is given a numerical score across eight GCSE subjects, with extra weighting for English and maths. In line with the recommendations of the Wolf Review in 2011 our data analysis does not include equivalent qualifications (e.g. BTECs). This year there have been changes to the rules governing KS4 Performance Tables, notably: large numbers of previously eligible qualifications are no longer counted; no qualification is counted as more than one GCSE; 'first entries' rather than 'best entries' are counted in some subjects (English, maths and other EBACC subjects).
- <sup>3</sup> Changes to GCSE assessment mean that we are not comparing like with like. Consequently, caution is needed when interpreting this figure, as it may not accurately reflect the attainment gap changes.
- <sup>4</sup> It should be noted that comparison data included a relatively small sample of 11 secondary schools.
- <sup>5</sup> The Alliance has measured progress against this Impact Goal through pupil destinations data, currently available for two terms after completing GCSEs. Alliance measures are based on currently available data which is for the year 2012/13.
- <sup>6</sup> A high tariff university, accepting approximately the top third of applicants based on UCAS point score. The other two groups are medium tariff and lower tariff providers. Each group accounts for around a third of all acceptances of UK 18-year-olds in recent cycles. Definition based on UCAS 2015 data.
- <sup>7</sup> A group of 24 universities which are committed to academic and research excellence.

## **Recommendations**

- <sup>8</sup> Use of additional data to provide a broader picture of an applicant's educational and social background.
- <sup>9</sup> The positive impact of parent engagement in their children's learning and development is well documented in the research literature.
- <sup>10</sup> Youth social action is defined as 'practical action in the service of others that creates positive change' (#iwill)

## **Impact Goal One**

- <sup>11</sup> Average point score in English and maths.
- <sup>12</sup> DfE (2015) Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results 2014 to 2015, London: Department for Education.
- <sup>13</sup> Ofsted (2015) Early Years Report, 2015, London: Ofsted.
- <sup>14</sup> Ofsted (2015) The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2014/15, London: Ofsted.
- <sup>15</sup> Crown (2015) Final Report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels, September 2015.
- <sup>16</sup> Government expectation at the end of EYFS. A child achieves a good level of development if he/she reaches the expected levels in the three prime areas of learning (communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development) and in two of the four specific areas (literacy and maths). This means the child has achieved at least the expected level across 12 of the 17 Early Learning Goals.

## **Impact Goal Two**

- <sup>17</sup> Based on 2013/14 data. In line with the recommendations of the Wolf Review in 2011 our data analysis does not include subject 'equivalences' (e.g. BTECs). The other notable changes to the rules governing KS4 Performance Tables in 2014 are: large numbers of previously eligible qualifications are no longer counted; no qualification is counted as more than one GCSE and 'first entries' rather than 'best entries' are counted in some subjects (English, maths and other EBACC subjects). This has had a large effect on some indicators, such as the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more A\*-C grades, including English and maths.
- <sup>18</sup> Caution is needed in comparing last year's figures; it is very likely that differences are due to the change in assessment methods. Therefore we cannot compare like with like.
- <sup>19</sup> Total points achieved by a pupil in his/her best 8 GCSEs
- <sup>20</sup> Ofsted (2015) The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief

Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2014/15, London: Ofsted

<sup>21</sup> DfE (2015) GCSE and equivalent attainment by pupil characteristics 2013 to 2014 (revised), Statistical First Release, London: Department for Education

### **Impact Goal Three**

<sup>22</sup> Department for Education (2015) Character Awards Application, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dfе-character-awards-application-window-now-open>

<sup>23</sup> Arthur, J., Kristjansson, K., Walker, D., Wouter, S., Jones, C. (2015) Character Education in UK Schools, Research Report, Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham

<sup>24</sup> Layard, R., Hagell, A., (2015) "Healthy Young Minds: Transforming the mental health of children" in Helliwell, John F., Richard Layard, and Jeffrey Sachs, eds. 2015. World Happiness Report 2015. New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network; Yeo, A. and Graham, J. (2015) A deep dive into social and emotional learning: what do the views of those involved tell us about the challenges for policy-makers? EIF/ Cabinet Office/ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission/ ReachAbility.

<sup>25</sup> Yeo, A. and Graham, J. (2015) A deep dive into social and emotional learning: what do the views of those involved tell us about the challenges for policy-makers? EIF/ Cabinet Office/ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission/ ReachAbility.

<sup>26</sup> Arthur, J., Kristjansson, K., Walker, D., Wouter, S., Jones, C. (2015) Character Education in UK Schools, Research Report, Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham

<sup>27</sup> In 2015 this included alternative provision with a military ethos, delivered by Skillforce (with mentoring in secondary schools), and the Cadet Expansion Scheme in schools.

<sup>28</sup> Funding of £1 million was made available by the Cabinet Office in July 2015 to increase the participation rate of young people from lower-socio economic groups in social action. Part of the fund is for organisations able to work with young people in more deprived areas of the country.

<sup>29</sup> #iwill Transforming Young People and Communities, in partnership with the Jubilee Centre for Character & Virtues: <http://education.iwill.org.uk>

<sup>30</sup> Yeo, A. and Graham, J. (2015) A deep dive into social and emotional learning: what do the views of those involved tell us about the challenges for policy-makers? EIF/ Cabinet Office/ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission/ ReachAbility.

<sup>31</sup> Report Card 2014 showed that children and young people

facing socio-economic disadvantage were: more likely to report feelings of low wellbeing and poor mental health than their more advantaged peers; less likely to feel in control of their success at school; more likely to have poorly developed social skills and exhibit behaviour which hinders learning; more likely to have low levels of self-belief; less likely to persevere in the face of challenges; more likely to have a mental illness; and four times more likely to be permanently excluded from school due to poor conduct.

<sup>32</sup> Goodman, A., Joshi., H., Nasim, B. and Tyler, C. (2015) Social and emotional skills in childhood and their long term effect on adult-life, London, Institute of Education, UCL: p.51

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Department for Education (2015) Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England 2013-2014<sup>48</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Yeo, A. and Graham, J. (2015) A deep dive into social and emotional learning: what do the views of those involved tell us about the challenges for policy-makers? EIF/ Cabinet Office/ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission/ ReachAbility.

<sup>36</sup> Hagell A., Coleman J., and Brooks F., (2015) Key Data on Adolescence 2015, London: Association for Young People's Health.

<sup>37</sup> PHSE Association (2015)

<sup>38</sup> Kirkman, E., Sanders, M., Emanuel, N and Larkin, C. (2016) Evaluating Youth Social Action: Does participating in social action boost the skills young people need to succeed in adult life?, London: Behavioural Insights Team

<sup>39</sup> Layard, R., Hagell, A., (2015) "Healthy Young Minds: Transforming the mental health of children" in Helliwell, John F., Richard Layard, and Jeffrey Sachs, eds. 2015. World Happiness Report 2015. New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network; Yeo, A. and Graham, J. (2015) A deep dive into social and emotional learning: what do the views of those involved tell us about the challenges for policy-makers? EIF/ Cabinet Office/ Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission/ ReachAbility.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ipsos/#iwill/Cabinet Office (2015) Youth Social Action in the UK 2015: A face-to-face survey of 10-20 year-olds in the UK, London: Ipsos/#iwill/Cabinet Office

<sup>47</sup> Department for Education (2015) Character Awards Application, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dfe-character-awards-application-window-now-open>

## Impact Goal Four

<sup>48</sup> The Alliance has measured progress against this Impact Goal through pupil destinations data, currently available for two terms after completing GCSEs. The data, however, do not offer a full picture of student destinations post-16: the Alliance would like to see data available on employment, education or training for eight terms after young people complete their GCSEs, to assess whether these outcomes have been sustained in a way that improves chances of future employment.

<sup>49</sup> A sustained education destination.

<sup>50</sup> Department for Education (2016) Destinations of KS4 and KS5 pupils, 2013 to 2014, London: DfE

<sup>51</sup> Report Card 2014 considered data from 2011/12

<sup>52</sup> Destinations included: full-time education, part-time education, work based learning, education and work based learning, education and training and NEET

<sup>53</sup> Department for Education (2015) Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England: End 2014, London: DfE

<sup>54</sup> DfE (2015) Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people in England measured using matched administrative data: Attainment by age 19 in 2014.

<sup>55</sup> DfE (2015) Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people in England measured using matched administrative data: Attainment by age 19 in 2014.

<sup>56</sup> PRUs are educational establishments, maintained by the local authority, for children and young people excluded from mainstream school or those who through ill-health

cannot attend mainstream school.

<sup>57</sup> Department for Education (2016) Destinations of KS4 and KS5 pupils, 2013 to 2014, London: DfE

<sup>58</sup> Department for Education (2015) NEET statistics: Quarterly Brief April – June 2015, London: Department for Education

<sup>59</sup> OECD (2014) Education at a Glance, Paris: OECD

<sup>60</sup> Department for Education (2015) Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16-18 year olds in England: End 2014, London: DfE

<sup>61</sup> The government raised the participation age (in education and training). From June 2013 young people were required to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turned 17. From June 2015, they were required to continue until their 18th birthday.

<sup>62</sup> Department for Education (2015) Destinations of KS4 and KS5 pupils, 2012 to 2013, London: DfE and Department for Education (2015) Destinations of KS4 and KS5 pupils, 2013 to 2014 (provisional), London: DfE

<sup>63</sup> Department for Education (2015) Destinations of KS4 and KS5 pupils, 2012 to 2013, London: DfE

<sup>64</sup> Department for Education (2016) Destinations of KS4 and KS5 pupils, 2013 to 2014, London: DfE

<sup>65</sup> It should be noted that London and the North East data is based on a relatively small sample of 11 comparison secondary schools

<sup>66</sup> Britton, J., Gregg, P., Macmillan, L. and Mitchell, S. (2011) The Early Bird... preventing young people from becoming a NEET statistic: Department of Economics and CMPO, University of Bristol and National Foundation for Educational Research (2012). Preventing young people from becoming NEET: A practical guide for headteachers (NFER Research Programme: From Education to Employment) Slough: NFER

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## Impact Goal Five

<sup>68</sup> The term 'selective universities' refers to those in the Sutton Trust 30 which comprise the top 25% of universities with the highest required UCAS scores.

<sup>69</sup> Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2014) Widening Participation in higher Education, London: BIS

<sup>70</sup> Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2015) Widening Participation in higher Education, London: BIS

<sup>71</sup> Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2015) Widening Participation in higher Education, London: BIS

- <sup>72</sup> Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2015) Widening Participation in higher Education, London: BIS
- <sup>73</sup> UCAS (2014) 2014 Application Cycle: End of Cycle Report Cheltenham: UCAS
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>75</sup> The POLAR3 classification is formed by ranking 2001 Census Area Statistics (CAS) wards by their young participation in HE rates for the combined 2005 to 2009 cohorts. This gives five quintile groups of areas ordered from '1' (those wards with the lowest participation in HE) to '5' (those wards with the highest participation in HE), each representing 20 per cent of UK young cohort.
- <sup>76</sup> UCAS (2015) 2015 Application Cycle: End of Cycle Report Cheltenham: UCAS
- <sup>77</sup> Selective university is one in the top third of HEIs when ranked by mean UCAS tariff score from the top three A level grades of entrant
- <sup>78</sup> Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2015) Free School Meals: Progression to Higher Education, London: BIS
- <sup>79</sup> A university, accepting approximately the top third of applicants based on UCAS point score. The other two groups are medium tariff and lower tariff providers. Each group accounts for around a third of all UK 18 year old acceptances in recent cycles.
- <sup>80</sup> UCAS (2015) 2015 Application Cycle: End of Cycle Report Cheltenham: UCAS
- <sup>81</sup> Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2015) Widening Participation in higher Education, London: BIS
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>83</sup> HEFCE (2015) Higher Education in England 2015, Cheltenham: HEFCE
- <sup>84</sup> Department for Education (2015) Destinations of KS4 and KS5 pupils, 2013 to 2014 (provisional), London: DfE
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>86</sup> From Alliance data (6.4 % from schools serving low income communities vs. 3.8 % from schools serving high income communities)
- <sup>87</sup> Russell Group (2015) Opening Doors: understanding and overcoming the barriers to university access, Part 1, London: Russell Group
- <sup>90</sup> Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2015) State of the Nation 2015
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- <sup>93</sup> Blandford, S. and Knowles, C. (2013) Achievement for All: Raising aspirations, access and achievement, London: Bloomsbury
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## Conclusion

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# Appendix 1

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Where data are available, this report details the progress made since 2012/13.

For the purposes of measuring Impact Goals One, Two and Four, the Alliance has analysed the gap between schools serving high and low income communities. Schools serving low income communities refers to State schools where 50% or more of the pupils attending come from the most deprived 30% of families according to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). Schools serving high income communities refers to State schools where 50% or more of the pupils attending come from the least deprived 30% of families according to IDACI. The comparison excludes private schools as there is insufficient pupil-level data available for effective comparisons to be made.

The Alliance measures the gap between schools serving high and low income communities rather than between poorer and more affluent pupils. This is in order to better capture data that includes those pupils whose families are on a low income but are just above the income threshold for free school meals (the poverty measure in schooling). This measurement also helps monitor the impact of the Alliance's efforts towards meeting the goals as many members work with and through schools to tackle educational inequality, rather than with individual pupils. In this report, school-level data is at times supplemented with pupil-level data in order to get a fuller picture of the gap or in order to examine it where school level data is not easily available. In this data, the definition of low income is free school meal eligibility (FSM) – in the report, pupils eligible for FSM are referred to as those from poor families and those who are not eligible as their more advantaged/affluent peers.

For Impact Goal One the gap has been measured in terms of average point score (APS). Historically, our analysis used the mean percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths. In 2013, we changed the measurement to use instead the average finely graded points score in English and maths. This was due to concerns that levels hid information about real underlying achievement trends, as schools have had strong incentives to ensure all their pupils merely reach level 4.

Additionally, it is debatable as to whether it has been an ambitious enough target.

For Impact Goal Two, the gap is measured according to APS, where each GCSE grade is given a numerical score across eight GCSE subjects, with extra weighting for English and maths. In line with the recommendations of the Wolf Review in 2011, our data analysis does not include subject 'equivalences' (e.g. BTECs). This year there have been changes to the rules governing KS4 Performance Tables, notably: large numbers of previously eligible qualifications are no longer counted; no qualification is counted as more than one GCSE; and 'first entries' rather than 'best entries' are counted in some subjects (English, maths and other EBACC subjects).

For Impact Goals One and Two, in order to calculate APS, national curriculum levels (at primary) or GCSE grades (at secondary) are each given a numerical score (as with A Level grades, which are converted into UCAS points for university entry requirements). This means that an average 'score' for the grades of all pupils within a school can be calculated. This has been chosen as a measure because it captures more information than the number of pupils getting over a 'benchmark' grade (such as the current government measure of success in GCSE, based on the percentage of pupils achieving five GCSE grades at C or above, including maths and English).

As an example, two schools may each have 70% of their pupils achieving a C grade or above and so appear to have similar levels of attainment. However, one school may be achieving a high number of A and A\* grades, with the majority of those who do not manage a C grade attaining a D grade; the other school may be getting 70% of pupils just across the D-C grade borderline, with the rest of the pupils attaining G and F grades. Using an APS measure of schools exposes these differences and provides a fuller picture of how a school serves all of its pupils: this is ideal for comparing school with school.

For Impact Goal 5, we have employed the same measurement as last year to look at the extent to which the gap has closed between pupils from low income families and

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high income families accessing university, including the 25% most selective universities; the figure we provide is based on FSM eligibility. We have also considered this in the context of information gathered from a range of sources some of which use different measures of low income, including postcode analysis (POLAR) and Socio-Economic Status (SES).

Although these measures are not directly comparable, the fact that different datasets reveal similar trends should give us confidence in their findings. In 2015, the government released new datasets which enables pupils from schools serving low/high income communities to be tracked through university to graduation. Some of this data was available to us this year. Consequently, we have been able to do a small scale comparison of students from schools in low and high income communities who went to a Russell Group university during 2009/10 for a three year degree and consider whether they remained during this time or left/dropped out of their course during 2010/11 or 2011/12. Although this data is incomplete and does not allow us to make a comparison with previous years, it has moved us one step closer to being able to more accurately measure Impact Goal 5 by graduation based on school level data. As the full dataset becomes available to us, we will also be reviewing whether the measure of success for IG5 is still appropriate or whether it needs to be altered to reflect this.

For Impact Goal Three, in the absence of significant measuring tools, we cannot reliably quantify changes over the year in the development of the key strengths (character, wellbeing and mental health) that young people need to succeed in life. Last year, permanent and fixed-period exclusions were identified as quantitative measures to provide the Alliance with some understanding of this area; we have considered these measures again this year. However, over the year, our knowledge and understanding of the area has evolved, primarily through developments in policy and research, moving us closer to the development of measuring tools.

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