

Closing the gap in an unequal society - a dream?

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Five Perspectives - 12.11.21

- **The gaps: Education Policy Institute**
- **The Forgotten Third**
- **Essex Education Task Force: equity and excellence**
- **The world according to Marc Rowland!**
- **A Language Collaborative: vocabulary, reading, **oracy****









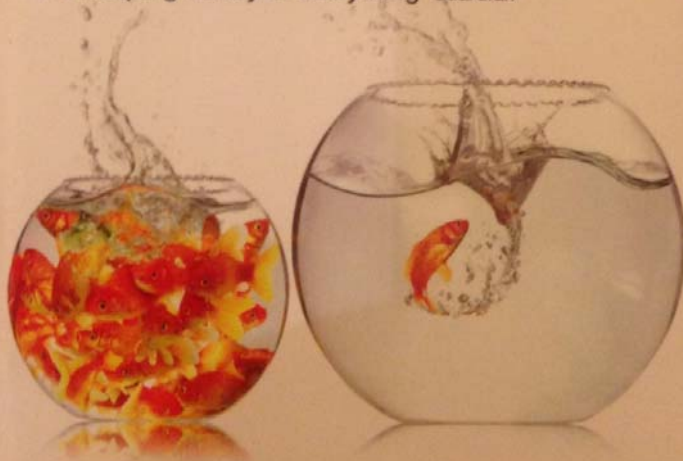
The Spirit Level

Why Equality is Better for Everyone

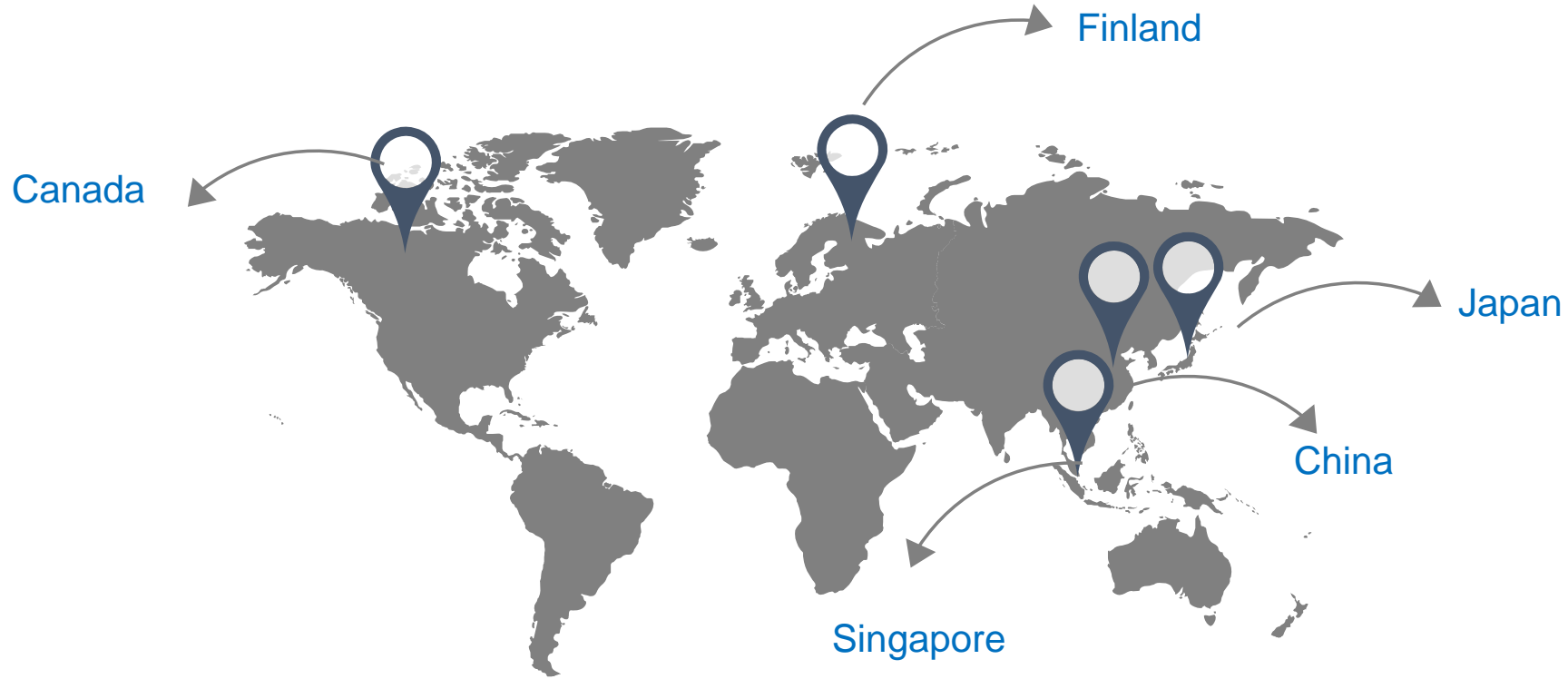
Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett

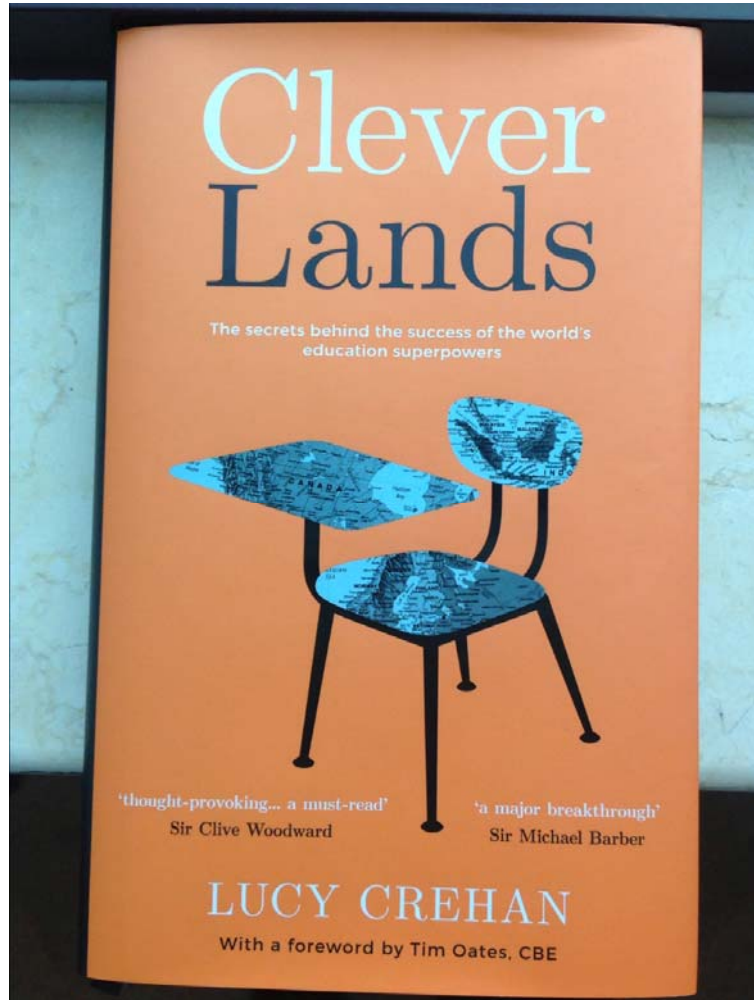
'A big idea, big enough to change political thinking'
Sunday Times

'A sweeping theory of everything' *Guardian*



Top of the PISA league: maths, science, reading at 15





CleverLands

**Lucy Crehan
2016**

High-Performing, Equitable Education Systems

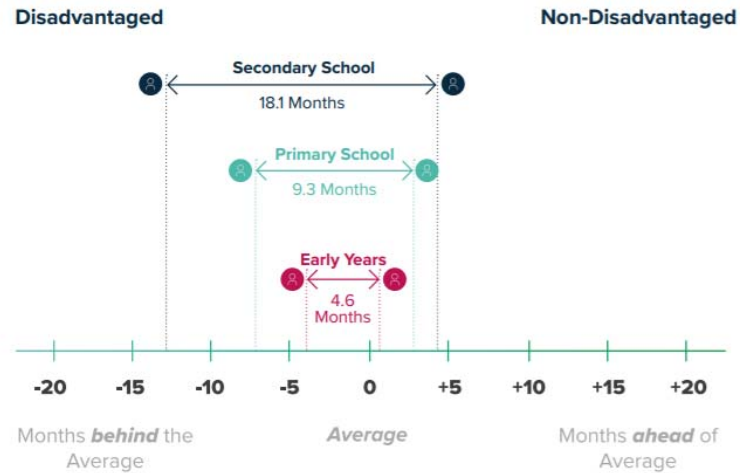
- 1 Getting children ready for formal learning
- 2 Designing curricula contexts for mastery
- 3 Supporting children to take on challenges, rather than making concessions
- 4 Treating teachers as professionals
- 5 Combining school accountability with school support

The gap at age 16 is equivalent to 18 months of development

The size of the **disadvantage gap** in 2019

What do we mean by disadvantaged?

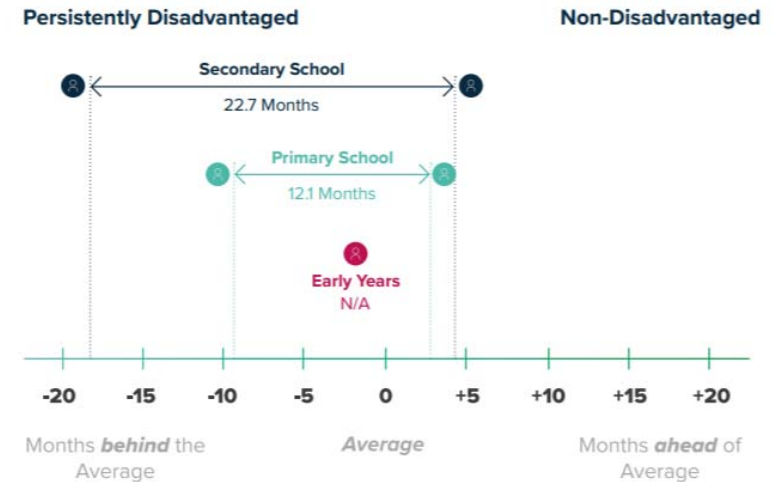
Pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years



The size of the **persistent disadvantage gap** in 2019

What do we mean by persistent disadvantage?

Pupils who are eligible for free school meals for at least 80 per cent of their time in school

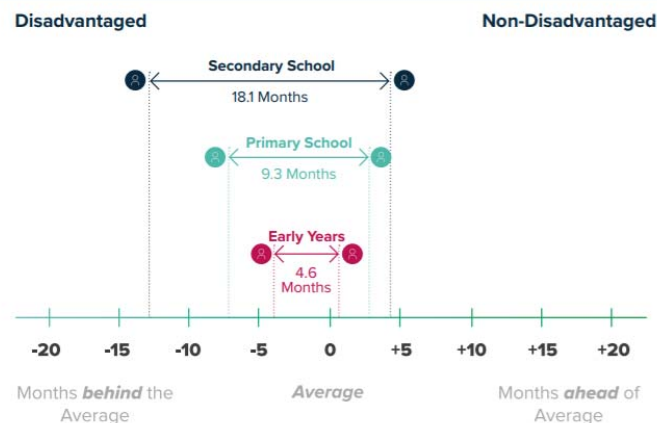


By the end of secondary school, disadvantaged pupils are over 18 months behind their peers

The size of the **disadvantage gap** in 2019

What do we mean by disadvantaged?

Pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years



- The disadvantage gap refers to the difference in attainment between pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium and their peers.
- This report is based on attainment data from summer 2019.
- Disadvantaged children were, on average, 4.6 months behind their peers by age 5.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, the gap was 9.3 months

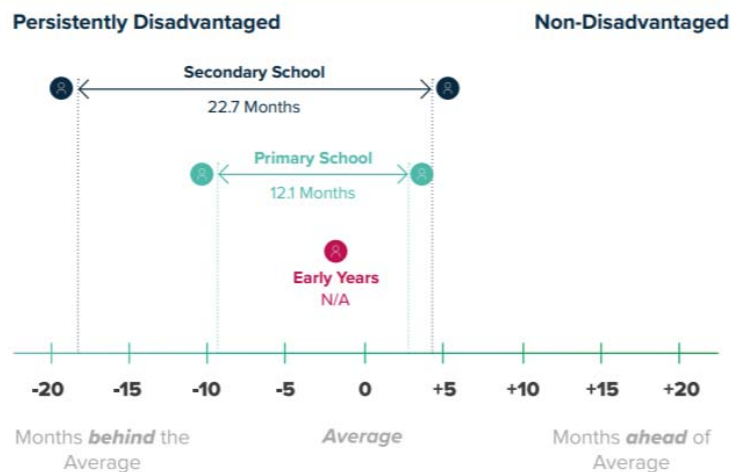
For persistently disadvantaged pupils, the gap is much wider

The size of the **persistent disadvantage gap** in 2019



What do we mean by persistent disadvantage?

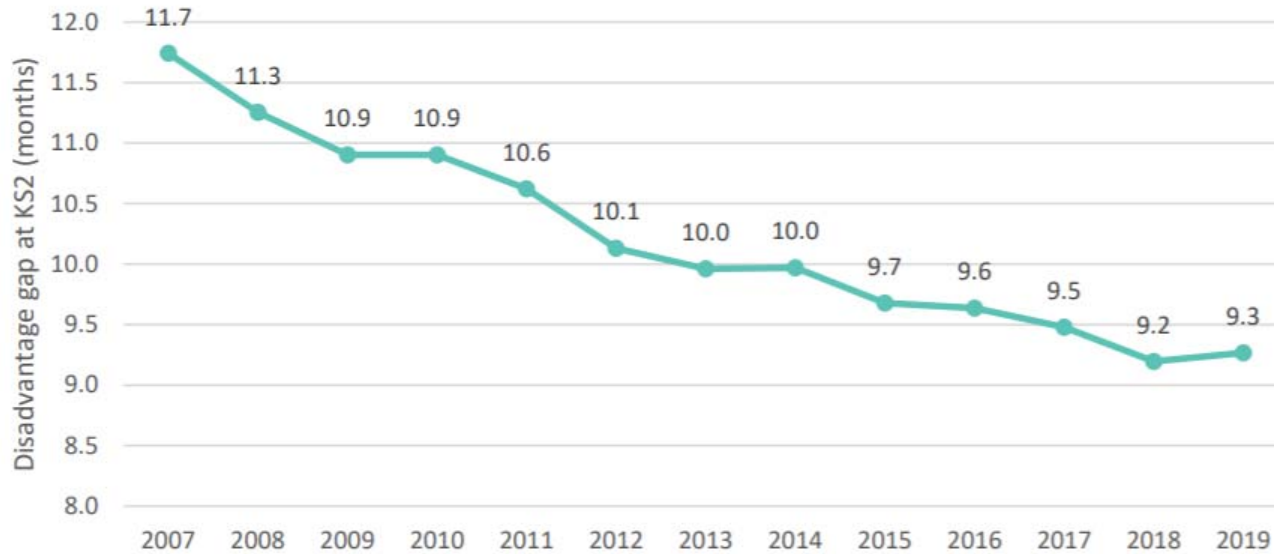
Pupils who are eligible for free school meals for at least 80 per cent of their time in school



- Persistently disadvantaged pupils refers to the those who have been eligible for Free School Meals for 80% or longer of their school lives.
- These pupils were over a year behind their non-disadvantaged peers by the end of Key Stage 2.

At all stages, the gap has stopped closing

Trends in the disadvantage gap in months at primary school

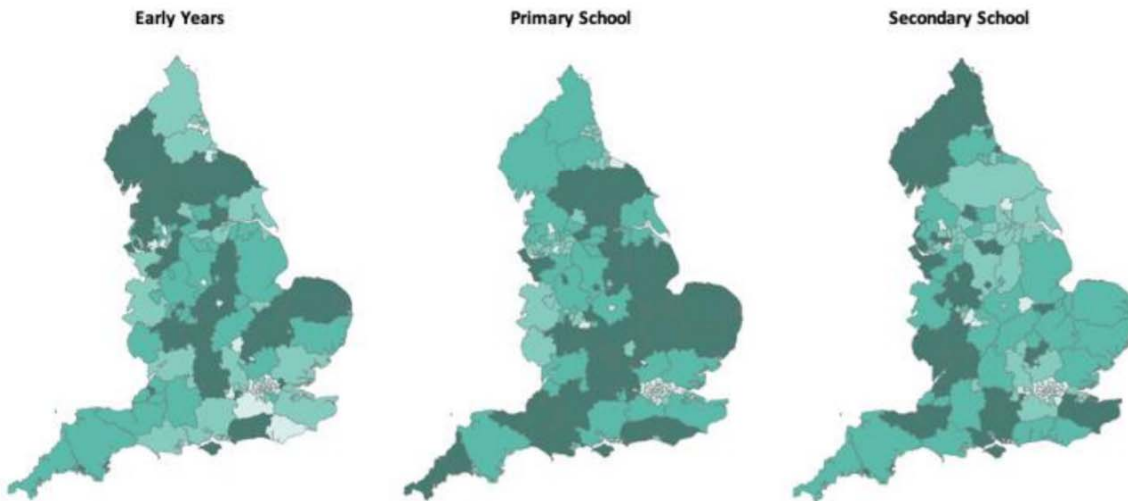


- In 2018, the gap started to widen in the early years and in secondary school
- In 2019, it started to also widen in primary school too (for the first time since 2007)

The disadvantage gap varies across the country as well as by phase

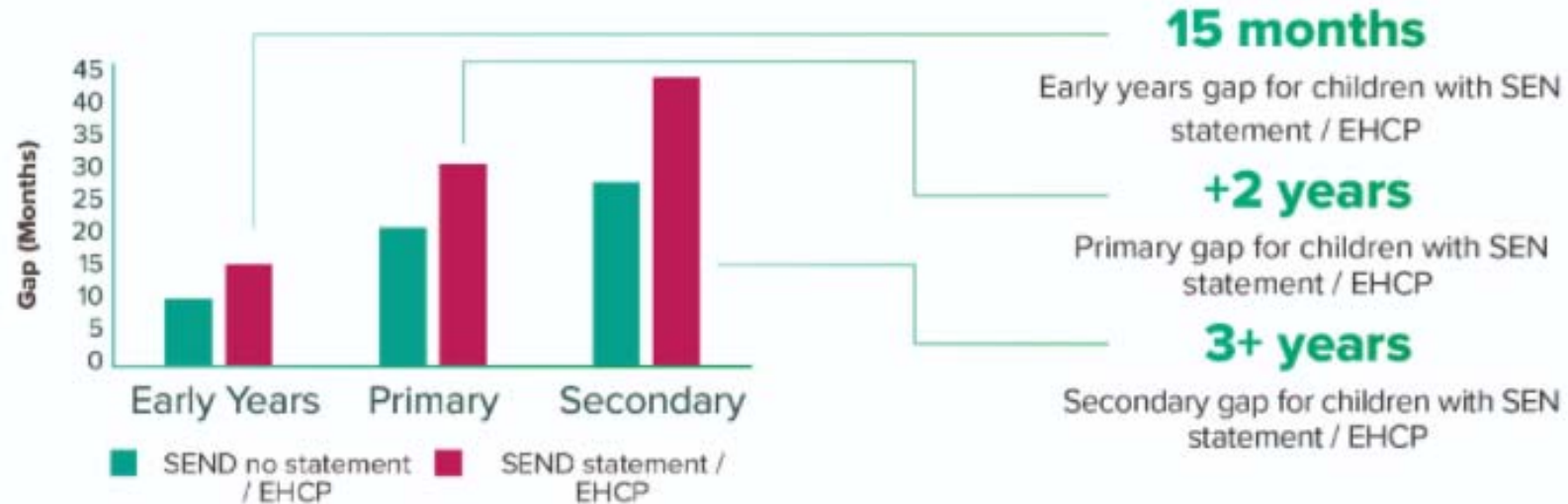
Disadvantage Gap

	Smallest 25%	Lower-middle 25%	Upper middle 25%	Largest 25%
Early years	1.5 - 3.6	3.6 - 4.6	4.6 - 5.4	5.4 - 7.1
Primary school	-0.8 - 7.3	7.3 - 9.7	9.7 - 11.1	11.1 - 14.8
Secondary school	0.5 - 16.2	16.2 - 19.7	19.7 - 21.1	21.1 - 26.3



- Regional variation in attainment is a well documented issue in England.
- We find that the largest gaps in the early years are concentrated in the East, the Midlands and North-West.
- In Primary, the largest gaps are in the East, Midlands and parts of the South West and the North.

The gap is significantly wider for pupils with SEND



- By age 5, children with an EHCP are around 15 months behind their peers
- That gap is over two years at the end of Key Stage 2

What are some of the **key drivers** of the disadvantage gap?

- Inequalities in **child development and school readiness**, determined by:
 - Maternal health and well-being from conception onwards
 - Family relationships, learning environment, and child-rearing strategies
 - Access to high quality early years education, family and health services
- Differential **experiences of disadvantaged pupils in school**:
 - Quality of teaching and classroom practices
 - Lacking belonging and self-esteem in relation to school, stereotyping and unconscious bias, and moving school at non-standard times
 - Structural issues such as selection, grouping and the accountability system
- Concentrated **neighbourhood disadvantage**:
 - Poor housing conditions and local facilities
 - Community poverty and exposure to crime

Existing evidence on raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils

1. Promote an **ethos of attainment for all pupils**, rather than stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as a group with less potential to succeed.
2. Have an **individualised approach to addressing barriers to learning and emotional support**, at an early stage, rather than providing access to generic support and focusing on pupils nearing their end-of-key-stage assessments.
3. Focus on **high quality teaching** first rather than on bolt-on strategies and activities outside school hours.
4. Focus on **outcomes for individual pupils** rather than on providing strategies.
5. Deploy the **best staff to support disadvantaged pupils**; develop skills and roles of teachers and TAs rather than using additional staff who do not know the pupils well.
6. Make **decisions based on data and respond to evidence**, using frequent, rather than one-off assessment and decision points.
7. Have **clear, responsive leadership**: setting ever higher aspirations and devolving responsibility for raising attainment to all staff, rather than accepting low aspirations and variable performance.

The Forgotten Third in England

- 190,000+ students in August 2019 failed to secure a grade 4 in English Language and mathematics (dubbed the 1,2,3-ers)
- 36% of the cohort of 16 year olds – ‘do a third have to fail so that two-thirds pass?’ Does this really mean a third cannot read and write?
- 36% at 11+ also failed in summer 2019 to meet national expectations in reading, writing and maths

The Forgotten Third: 3 questions for us all

1. Are there always a third of children and young people who cannot attain nationally expected standards?
2. Is that third *baked* into our system? ('comparable outcomes')
3. Can we do things differently with qualifications?

1. Early Years

- The Department for Education, local authorities, and third-sector providers should continue to invest in high-quality support programmes for **parents and carers**, rooted in evidence-based models.
- The government should extend the entitlement to **30 hours** of free early education per week to all three to four-year-olds, and it should ensure the level of funding is sufficient to meet the cost of sustainable high-quality provision.
- The government should work with local authorities and education providers to **improve the skills of early years practitioners**, working towards ensuring that every early education setting is graduate-led.

2. Curriculum and pedagogy

- The Department for Education, local authorities, multi-academy trusts, school partnerships and schools should continue to invest in language programmes which are having a measurable impact on **closing the language gap**. And, where possible, should provide training in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) techniques for all teachers and support staff.
- As part of schools' and colleges' curriculum development, primary and secondary subject specialists should consider building into their planning the vocabulary that is needed to develop students' competence in their subjects, and the opportunities to practise this vocabulary.
- Primary and secondary schools should consider how to implement high-quality whole-school programmes which explicitly promote **oracy and articulation**, and the essential stepping stones in reading and writing which underpin children's learning in all subjects. This could have a special spotlight on the 10 – 12 age range, supported by Department for Education grant funding through the national English Hubs.
- The Department for Education should commission a focused review of the **English curriculum from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 3**, with a view to providing greater continuity between what is taught in primary and secondary schools, and encouraging secondary schools to build more effectively on the strong foundations laid in primary.

3. Teacher education

- Professional development providers should be encouraged to run innovative courses for senior leaders on ‘**language at the heart of the leader’s mission**’ – promoting the concept that every teacher in every classroom is a teacher of the English language.
- From September 2020, all primary and secondary teacher training programmes should include substantial courses on the teaching of reading, writing and oracy; ESOL teaching techniques; **and developing teachers’ own skills as fluent and accurate writers.**

4. Qualifications

- A working group representing the Department for Education, Ofqual and the professional associations should be established to introduce a **Passport in English to replace the current GCSE English Language**. This highly respected qualification would be taken by all students 'graduating' from school/college into the workplace or higher education. The Passport should be criterion referenced, comprising online assessment, a portfolio of a student's writing and a significant oracy component. The qualification could be taken at different levels between the ages of 15 and 19, ending the wasteful GCSE resit industry.
- It is recommended that the Passport in English be certificated by a body with international standing, with employer approval and branding. It is also recommended that similar consideration be given to a **companion Passport in Maths**.
- All students should continue to take **GCSE English Literature as a core subject**. To safeguard good curriculum breadth and students' access to 'the best that has been thought and said', the examination should be taken at the end of Year 11 only.
- A new approach to primary assessment and accountability should be developed to **replace Key Stage 2 SATs**, in order to redress the distorting effect on the curriculum of the current approach.
- The Department for Education – supported by Ofqual – should no longer use the unhelpful terminology of **'standard' and 'strong' pass** when announcing GCSE results to students, parents and the media. A grade is a grade.

Essex Education Task Force

Five key terms of reference: RENEWAL, EQUALITY, AMBITION

1. To ensure that no child or young person is 'left out or left behind' as the county builds a better future for all its residents. We need to listen regularly to children.
2. To have a focus on children and young people who have special education needs, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those who – with their families - have become more disadvantaged as a result of the pandemic.
3. To have an oversight that the Covid-19 impact on children and young people is being mitigated consistently throughout Essex.
4. To champion 'equity, inclusion and excellence' across the County's education sectors, sharing the best practices, locally, regionally and nationally.
5. To embed system leadership and the habit of collaboration within the education sectors, powerfully linked to the County's business, health, voluntary, social, arts and sports sectors.

Essex Education Task Force

- **£50K: Pre-school language – professional development.**
- **£75K: ‘Transition coaches’: vulnerable students at 16+, moving into FE Colleges.**
- **£100K: to voluntary sector to provide summer and future holiday outdoor learning/residentials for most vulnerable students and those with SEND.**
- **£100K: ‘Transition coaches’ for vulnerable children and those with SEND in Year 6, moving from primary to secondary school.**
- **£100K: Leaders and their well-being.**
- **£160K: Teenage mental health and well-being.**

Essex Education Task Force

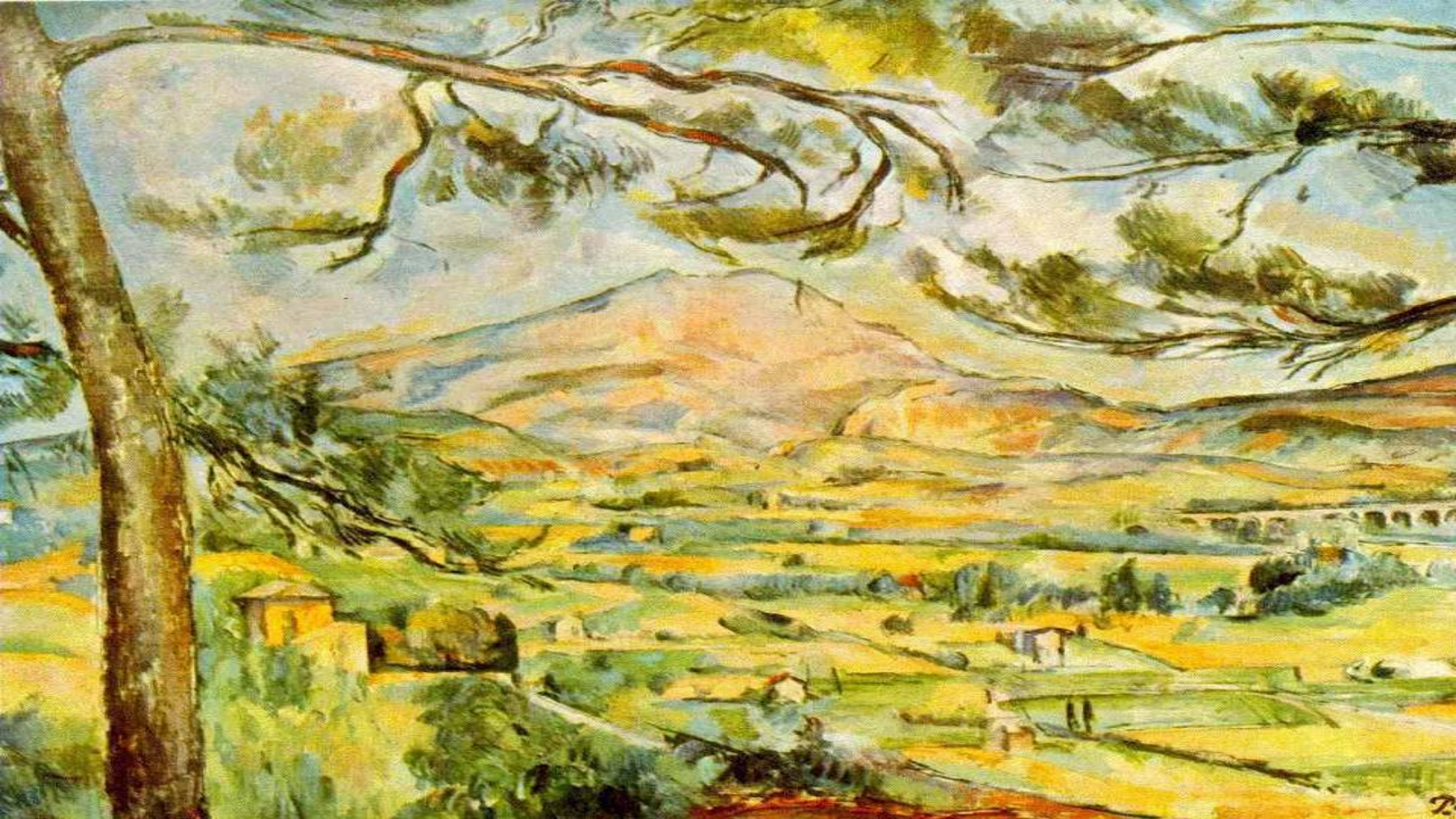
- **£1 million investment in reading, with a focus on the primary/secondary transition years: Years 6/7. Links to Essex Year of Reading 2022.**

Every Essex child a confident reader

- **Renewal: to support children and young people who have fallen behind with their reading over the past year.**
- **Equality: to read confidently is the golden key to being a successful learner**
- **Ambition: to ensure that every Essex child leaves school able to read at their age level or better.**

Excellence is not an act but a habit (Aristotle)

- **High intention** in practice means that leaders and teams at all levels set out high, specific ambitions in their respective domains.
- **Sincere effort** means that all staff approach their daily and weekly tasks with a sincerity and commitment that is personally and professionally satisfying.
- **Intelligent execution** means that all staff think intelligently and practically about the best ways to achieve their goals.







Marc Rowland - pupil premium champion

1. Don't see disadvantage as a problem with the pupils; see it as a challenge and an opportunity for the school.
2. Address the pupil learning needs, not labels. Avoid automatic associations with low attainment and funding streams.
3. Focus on the things that are most impacting on the attainment of disadvantaged pupils: oral language, reading – especially language comprehension, foundations for numeracy. Think about the development of staff expertise to meet pupil need.
4. Focus on those things that are in your gift – don't try to solve all of society's problems.
5. It's a slog – there is no magic trick out there. Relentlessly focus on the experiences of pupils in the classroom. Avoid over intervention.
6. Don't talk about early intervention, *act on* early intervention.

A Language Collaborative

- **Students:** embedding the dignity and positive self-esteem of being able to speak, read and write with fluency
- **Teachers:** ‘every teacher is a teacher of the English language’ – made explicit in classrooms

Language Collaborative

- **Students' literacy**
- **Academic language**
- **Oracy and articulation**
- **Fun and fundamentals**

Language Collaborative

The three circles of English – Braj Kachru:

- Inner Circle
- Outer Circle
- Expanding Circle

Language Collaborative

- 1921 George Sampson
- 1975 The Bullock Report
- 1998 National Literacy Strategy
- Everything has been thought of before, the challenge is to think of it again.....

Language Collaborative

- Let all teachers in the nation's classrooms recommit themselves to being teachers of English.
- Let all students be reminded that they are innate knowers of the English language – a global gift!

end.

Teachers' Standards (2012)

- demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject

Oracy Framework: now the masks are off, let every voice be heard.....

- **See pack: Alumnis Oracy Framework**
- **You can make a difference - Roddy Doyle!**
- **‘We beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.’**

RB. end.