Progress in priority areas

Progress gaps and leadership ratings in Areas 5 and 6 and Opportunity Areas since 2010

Jon Andrews
Education Policy Institute

Katy Theobald
Ambition School Leadership

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Executive Summary

The progress gap

This analysis by the Education Policy Institute investigates school leadership and pupil performance in Opportunity Areas and the DfE's areas 5 and 6.

The progress gap is the difference between the progress made by disadvantaged or persistently disadvantaged pupils from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 and the progress made in the same period by non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. It is measured in months of learning lost.

Disadvantaged children in areas 5 and 6 and in Opportunity Areas experience the largest progress gaps. The gap between the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in areas 5 and 6 and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally is 14.9 months, twice as large as the 7.2 month gap in areas 1 and 2. The progress gap in Opportunity Areas is even larger, at 18.4 months.

Persistently disadvantaged pupils – in receipt of free school meals for 80% of time measured – make worse progress. They experience a progress gap of 17.9 months in areas 5 and 6 and 20.1 months in Opportunity Areas.

The in-area gap – between the progress made by non-disadvantaged and disadvantaged pupils within areas – is also larger in areas 5 and 6 than in areas 1 and 2 and is largest in Opportunity Areas.

Looking at the change in the progress gap over time, the analysis shows that between 2010 and 2015:

- Disadvantaged children in areas 5 and 6 and Opportunity Areas have always experienced a larger progress gap than disadvantaged children in areas 1 and 2.

- In areas 5 and 6, the progress gap closed marginally between 2010 and 2013 but increased in 2014 and reached 14.9 months in 2015: 0.2 months larger than its size in 2010.

- In Opportunity Areas, the progress gap has grown every year from 2010 to 2015. It increased by 3.6 months for non-disadvantaged pupils, 6.4 months for disadvantaged pupils and 8.3 months for persistently disadvantage pupils.

- The progress gap for persistently disadvantaged pupils has followed a different trajectory in each area. In areas 5 and 6 it has remained over 15.1 months but in Opportunity Areas it started smaller in 2010 at 11.8 months and grew to 20.1 months by 2015.

Leadership and Management

Strong leadership is essential if schools are to improve, so this analysis looked at the Ofsted ratings for Leadership and Management.

- In March 2016, there was a ten percentage point difference between the proportion of schools rated Good or Outstanding for Leadership and Management in areas 1 and 2 compared to areas 5 and 6 and Opportunity Areas.

- Leadership and Management has improved in all areas since March 2010 but was less likely to improve in individual schools in areas 5 and 6 or in Opportunity Areas.

- In areas 5 and 6, Leadership and Management was twice as likely to fall from Good or Outstanding to Inadequate or Requires Improvement compared to areas 1 and 2. It was most likely to fall in Opportunity Areas where 18% of schools with Good or Outstanding leadership in 2010 saw a decline to Requires Improvement or Inadequate by March 2016.

- Schools in Opportunity Areas and areas 5 and 6 have worse ratings for Leadership and Management and are more likely to see these ratings fall, suggesting they have less capacity to deliver improvements to close the progress gap.

Conclusion

These analyses support the DfE's focus on areas 5 and 6 and, within them, Opportunity Areas. These are the areas where disadvantaged children experience the largest progress gaps and where persistently disadvantaged children make the worst progress of all. In Opportunity Areas these progress gaps have grown dramatically over the past five years.

Action is needed to stop this decline. We must increase the number of high-quality leaders in these areas and support those in post, so that schools have enough leaders capable of improving school performance, closing the progress gap and ensuring positive outcomes for pupils.

Rationale for this research

Our disadvantaged pupils need extra support

Nationally, disadvantaged pupils make on average less progress and have lower attainment than their non-disadvantaged peers. However, as recent analysis by the Education Policy Institute demonstrated, there is substantial variation in the gap between the progress of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils, depending on how many other disadvantaged pupils attend the same school and also whether a large proportion of pupils have English as an additional language.[1]

In March 2016 the Department for Education evaluated each area of the country on its current level of academic performance and also the capacity within the area to help schools to improve. Each Local Authority District was grouped into one of six areas,[2] formerly named Achieving Excellence Areas, with areas 5 and 6 being those that performed worst. Children in these areas make less progress and have lower attainment; they have worse access to good schools and schools with good leadership; and there is less capacity for these areas to improve by working with National Leaders of Education, Teaching Schools or strong Multi-Academy Trusts.

In October 2016, continuing this focus on specific geographical areas, the Secretary of State announced targeted support for the first six Opportunity Areas, which the Department for Education identified as facing challenges around social mobility.[3]

While we know that children in areas 5 and 6 and in Opportunity Areas make less progress and have lower attainment than children in other areas, no data has yet been released that shows how children's progress in these areas has changed over time. Therefore it is not clear whether the challenges in these areas are long-standing or have only emerged in recent years. In addition, while we know that disadvantaged children face larger progress gaps on average in England, no data has shown the scale of the progress gap they experience in areas 1 to 6 or the Opportunity Areas.

This analysis, carried out by the Education Policy Institute (EPI), extends their previous work by evaluating how the progress gap varies in different areas and inside and outside Opportunity Areas.

It addresses two questions:

Q1. **Do all children make equally poor progress in areas 5 and 6 and the Opportunity Areas, or does the progress gap vary by pupils' level of disadvantage?**

Q2. **Have children in areas 5 and 6 and Opportunity Areas always made the poorest progress or has this changed with time?**

Good leadership is critical for success

Good leadership is essential for supporting sustainable school improvement.[4,5,6,7] The existing area categorisation shows that areas 5 and 6 have the lowest proportion of Good and Outstanding leaders, who will be essential for improving the quality of schools and educational outcomes in these areas.

In order to assess whether these areas will have the high-quality leadership they need, we finish this paper with a new analysis of Ofsted Leadership and Management ratings. The analysis evaluates the likelihood that these areas will experience improvements in leadership and will sustain existing good leadership, based on historic trends.

This addresses a third question:

Q3. **Have the Ofsted ratings for Leadership and Management improved or worsened between 2010 and 2016 in areas 5 and 6 and Opportunity Areas?**

[1] J Hutchinson, J Dunford, M Treadaway. *Divergent Pathways: the disadvantage gap, accountability and the pupil premium.* London: Education Policy Institute. 2016.

[2] "Indicator data: defining 'achieving excellence areas' - ad hoc statistical release". Department for Education 2016, accessed 9 November 2016. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defining-achieving-excellence-areas-methodology

[3] "Social mobility package unveiled by Education Secretary". Published 4 October 2016, accessed 9 November 2016. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/social-mobility-package-unveiled-by-education-secretary

[4] P Rudd, H Poet, G Featherstone, et al. *Evaluation of City Challenge Leadership Strategies: overview report.* Slough: NFER. 2011.

[5] K Seashore Louis, K Leithwood, K Wahlstrom, S Anderson. *Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning.* Washington, DC: Wallace Foundation. 2010.

[6] E Thoonen, P Sleegers, F Oort, T Peetsma. "Building school-wide capacity for improvement: the role of leadership, school organizational conditions, and teacher factors", School Effectiveness and School Improvement (2012) Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 441-460.

[7] A Hill, L Mellon, B Laker, J Goddard. The one type of leader who can turn around a failing school. *Harvard Business Review,* 20 Oct 2016.
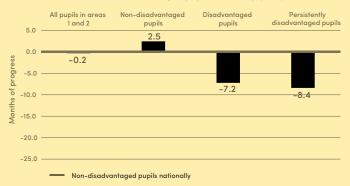
Section A:
The progress gap

Methodology

The progress gap analysis follows the same methodology first introduced in the EPI report, 'Education in England: progress and goals', in which the Key Stage 4 progress gap is expressed as the number of months of additional academic development experienced by non-disadvantaged pupils, compared with the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. These gaps are shown for the cohorts finishing Key Stage 4 each year from 2010 to 2015. All references to the size of the gap are in relation to 2015 unless otherwise stated.

The charts in this report also show the progress gap for persistently disadvantaged pupils – those who have been eligible for free school meals at least 80% of the time between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. Previous analysis by EPI demonstrates that persistently disadvantaged pupils have seen the slowest closure in the attainment gap over time.[9]
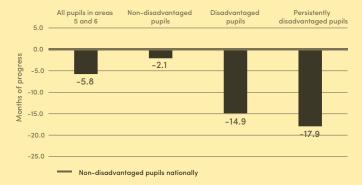
The data was split by areas 1-6 and by Opportunity Areas. To calculate the progress gap, the progress of disadvantaged, persistently disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils in these areas was compared to the national average for non-disadvantaged pupils, to show how many months more or less progress children in these areas make between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 compared to non-disadvantaged children across the country. The change in the progress gap over time was evaluated from 2010 to 2015 to see whether it has closed more or less quickly in areas 5 and 6 or in the Opportunity Areas.

When reference is made to an 'in-area gap' this refers to the progress made by disadvantaged pupils within areas 1 and 2, 5 and 6 and the Opportunity Areas compared to the progress made by non-disadvantaged pupils within the same area.

Pupil progress in areas 1 and 2 compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally (2015)

All pupils in areas 1 and 2	Non-disadvantaged pupils	Disadvantaged pupils	Persistently disadvantaged pupils
−0.2	2.5	−7.2	−8.4

— Non-disadvantaged pupils nationally

Pupil progress in areas 5 and 6 compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally (2015)

All pupils in areas 5 and 6	Non-disadvantaged pupils	Disadvantaged pupils	Persistently disadvantaged pupils
−5.8	−2.1	−14.9	−17.9

— Non-disadvantaged pupils nationally

Pupil progress in Opportunity Areas compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally (2015)

All pupils in Opportunity Areas	Non-disadvantaged pupils	Disadvantaged pupils	Persistently disadvantaged pupils
−9.5	−4.7	−18.4	−20.1

— Non-disadvantaged pupils nationally

[8]N Perera, M Treadaway, R Johnes. Education in England: progress and goals. London: Education Policy Institute. 2016.
[9]Ibid.

Findings

Q1. Do all children make equally poor progress in areas 5 and 6 and the Opportunity Areas, or does the progress gap vary by pupils' level of disadvantage?

The Opportunity Areas and areas 5 and 6 were identified as priority areas by the DfE partly because all pupils within them were making low progress. The graphs opposite break down the progress gap experienced by pupils in these areas by level of disadvantage. They show that all pupils in Opportunity Areas and areas 5 and 6, whether or not they are disadvantaged, make worse progress than pupils elsewhere.

For example, in 2015, pupils in Opportunity Areas made 9.5 months less progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. However, disadvantaged and persistently disadvantaged pupils are experiencing the worst progress gaps of all.

The impact of disadvantage within areas varies

The in-area gap between the progress of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children is 3.1 months larger in areas 5 and 6 than in areas 1 and 2. In areas 1 and 2 disadvantaged children make 9.7 months less progress than non-disadvantaged children within the area, whereas in areas 5 and 6 they make 12.8 months less progress.

The in-area gap between the progress of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is largest in Opportunity Areas where disadvantaged pupils make 13.7 months less progress than their non-disadvantaged peers – a difference of over a year. This is in a context where non-disadvantaged children in these areas are already making less progress than non-disadvantaged children nationally.

The additional progress gap experienced by persistently disadvantaged pupils, above and beyond all disadvantaged pupils, also varies by area. The in-area progress gap for persistently disadvantaged pupils in areas 1 and 2 and the Opportunity Areas is 12% larger than for all disadvantaged pupils. In contrast in areas 5 and 6 it is 24% larger. The reasons for this vary by area.

In areas 1 and 2, all disadvantaged pupils, whether persistently disadvantaged or not, experience a smaller gap than disadvantaged pupils in other areas. In Opportunity Areas, they both experience a larger gap. In areas 5 and 6, there is a clearer difference between the progress made by persistently disadvantaged and other disadvantaged pupils.

The progress gap is wider in priority areas

Nationally, disadvantaged pupils make less progress than their non-disadvantaged peers. However, this analysis shows that disadvantaged pupils in Opportunity Areas and in areas 5 and 6 are falling even further behind.

Disadvantaged children in areas 5 and 6 experience a progress gap that is twice as large as the gap experienced by disadvantaged pupils in areas 1 and 2. In areas 5 and 6, disadvantaged pupils make 14.9 months less progress than non-disadvantaged children nationally. In areas 1 and 2 the gap is 7.2 months. This means a disadvantaged child from areas 5 and 6 loses an additional 7.7 months of learning between the end of primary school and their GCSEs compared to children whose families have similar incomes but live in areas 1 and 2. The progress gap is even larger in Opportunity Areas.

Disadvantaged pupils in Opportunity Areas make 18.4 months less progress at Key Stage 4 than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. That gap is 1.6 times larger than for all disadvantaged pupils outside Opportunity Areas who, on average, make 11.8 months less progress.

In all areas, persistently disadvantaged children experienced the greatest progress gap in 2015. Persistently disadvantaged pupils have been eligible for free school meals at least 80% of the time between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. They make almost a year and a half less progress in areas 5 and 6 compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. This gap is 2.1 times larger in areas 5 and 6 than in areas 1 and 2: 17.9 months compared with 8.4 months.

Persistently disadvantaged pupils in Opportunity Areas experience the largest progress gap of 20.1 months. This is 5.8 months larger than the progress gap of 14.3 months experienced by persistently disadvantaged pupils outside Opportunity Areas.
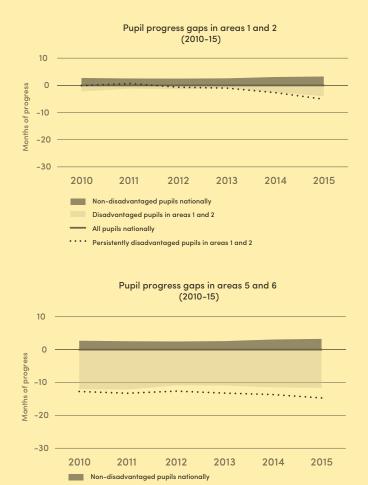
Q2. Have children in areas 5 and 6 and Opportunity Areas always made the least progress or has this changed with time?

In the charts below, the dark grey area represents the progress made by non-disadvantaged pupils nationally compared to all pupils. The light grey area represents the progress made by disadvantaged pupils within the area, compared to all pupils nationally. The gap is the difference between the top of the dark grey area and the bottom of the light grey area. The progress gap is calculated relative to the average progress made by all pupils, so the black line at 0 months represents the average progress made nationally.

It is important to note that the changes in Key Stage 4 performance tables in 2014 mean that trends in the progress gap in 2014 and 2015 may be due to factors other than changes in children's learning. Due to the 2014 changes in performance measures, trends in the progress gap are best evaluated from 2010 to 2013 and then between 2014 and 2015.

Pupil progress gaps in areas 1 and 2 (2010–15)

Non-disadvantaged pupils nationally
Disadvantaged pupils in areas 1 and 2
All pupils nationally
Persistently disadvantaged pupils in areas 1 and 2

Pupil progress gaps in areas 5 and 6 (2010–15)

Non-disadvantaged pupils nationally
Disadvantaged pupils in areas 5 and 6
All pupils nationally
Persistently disadvantaged pupils in areas 5 and 6

After a small improvement, progress gaps increased across areas 1 and 2 and 5 and 6

In general, the progress gap closed from 2010 to 2013 and re-opened in 2014 and 2015. Nationally, between 2010 and 2013 the progress gap was closing from 11.5 months in 2010 to 9.8 months in 2013. However, in 2014, with the changes in performance measures, the gap reverted to 11.4 months – close to 2010 levels – and by 2015 it was 11.9 months, the largest gap seen across the five-year period and 0.4 months larger than the gap in 2010.

The gap for disadvantaged pupils in areas 5 and 6 followed a very similar pattern. It closed from 14.7 months to 13.5 months between 2010 and 2013 before increasing again in 2014 and reaching 14.9 months in 2015: 0.2 months larger than its size in 2010.

In absolute terms, between 2010 and 2015, disadvantaged children in areas 5 and 6 always faced the largest progress gap. However, disadvantaged children in areas 1 and 2 experienced a larger relative change in the progress gap over the same period.

In 2010, children in areas 1 and 2 faced a progress gap of 4.9 months. As in other areas, the gap closed for these children until 2013 and then widened in 2014 and 2015. By 2015 the progress gap was 7.2 months, 2.3 months larger than the gap in 2010. This is not a large absolute change, but as the progress gap in areas 1 and 2 was comparatively small in 2010, a 2.3 month increase in the gap equates to a large, 46% change in its size over the five year period.

Focusing in on the most persistently disadvantaged children, they have experienced the largest change in the progress gap over the five years. Nationally, the progress gap for persistently disadvantaged children was 28% larger in 2015 compared with 2010. Throughout this time, persistently disadvantaged children in areas 5 and 6 have always experienced a larger progress gap than those in areas 1 and 2 (between 15.1 and 17.9 months). However, the largest proportional change was experienced by persistently disadvantaged children in areas 1 and 2.
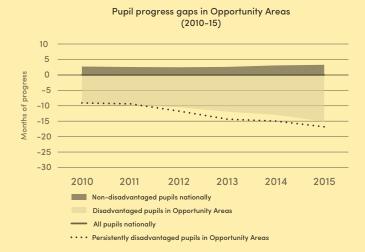
In areas 1 and 2 persistently disadvantaged pupils were actually making more progress than other disadvantaged pupils from 2010 to 2012. In 2010, these children faced a progress gap of 2.8 months, whereas the progress gap for disadvantaged children in the same areas was 4.9 months. However, from 2012 onwards this situation started to reverse. The progress gap for persistently disadvantaged children grew until in 2015 it was 8.4 months: three times larger than in 2010 and 1.2 months larger than the progress gap for all disadvantaged children.

A persistent decline in Opportunity Areas

Opportunity Areas have seen the most consistent decline in children's progress. These areas followed a different trajectory to the national picture. In Opportunity Areas, the progress gap grew for all pupils – whether disadvantaged, persistently disadvantaged or non-disadvantaged – every year from 2010 to 2015. Since 2010 the gap has increased by 3.6 months for non-disadvantaged pupils, 6.4 months for disadvantaged pupils and 8.3 months for persistently disadvantage pupils.

In Opportunity Areas, persistently disadvantaged pupils were also making slightly more progress than other disadvantaged pupils in 2010 and 2011. However, they made 1.3 months less progress in 2012 and by 2015 were making 1.7 months less progress than all disadvantaged children.

Pupil progress gaps in Opportunity Areas
(2010-15)

- ▬ Non-disadvantaged pupils nationally
- ▬ Disadvantaged pupils in Opportunity Areas
- ▬ All pupils nationally
- •••• Persistently disadvantaged pupils in Opportunity Areas

Summary and conclusions

In every area, disadvantaged pupils make less progress than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

The progress gap for disadvantaged pupils is consistently larger in the geographical areas that the DfE has identified as in need of additional support. It is 2.1 times larger in areas 5 and 6 than in areas 1 and 2, and 1.6 times larger in Opportunity Areas than the rest of the country.

We see clear variation between the areas

However, since 2010 the progress gap for disadvantaged pupils has developed differently in each area.

In areas 5 and 6 it has remained stubbornly large at over 13 months but has not notably increased. In contrast, while in areas 1 and 2 the gap has remained relatively small (in 2015 it was still 7.7 months smaller than the gap in areas 5 and 6), it has nonetheless grown by 46% between 2010 and 2015, with most of the growth coming after the changes to performance tables in 2013. In Opportunity Areas, the increase in the gap appears less closely related to the changes in performance measures: it has grown every year since 2010.

The magnitude of the decline is also much more marked than in other areas. Whereas in 2010, the progress gap for disadvantaged pupils in Opportunity Areas was only 5% larger than the gap in non-Opportunity Areas, by 2015 it was 57% larger – having grown by 6.4 months. Further research should investigate why Opportunity Areas have seen such a dramatic decline in progress within the past five years and should examine progress in these areas before 2010.
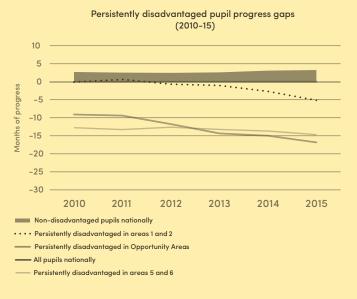
Potential continuities with previous research on student progress

It is interesting to compare these area-level findings to the school-level analysis previously completed by EPI, as they may be picking up a similar pattern in the progress gap. EPI's previous analysis showed that in schools with the highest proportion of disadvantaged pupils the progress gap was shrinking, whereas it was growing in schools with the lowest levels of disadvantage.

It can also be observed that Opportunity Areas do not have particularly high proportions of disadvantaged pupils (at least when disadvantage is measured by free school meals). If the schools in these areas also have comparatively low proportions of disadvantaged pupils, they might be following the national pattern where such schools have a growing progress gap. Further analysis should focus on patterns of school-level disadvantage and progress in these areas.

Persistently disadvantaged students' progress varies in different areas

The progress gap for persistently disadvantaged pupils shows a markedly different trajectory to the gap for other disadvantaged pupils within each area, but also for persistently disadvantaged pupils in other areas. The most recent data show the biggest progress gaps are in Opportunity Areas.

Persistently disadvantaged pupil progress gaps (2010–15)

- ▬ Non-disadvantaged pupils nationally
- ···· Persistently disadvantaged in areas 1 and 2
- Persistently disadvantaged in Opportunity Areas
- All pupils nationally
- Persistently disadvantaged in areas 5 and 6

Persistently disadvantaged pupils in areas 1 and 2 have consistently experienced a much smaller progress gap than those in areas 5 and 6 and in Opportunity Areas. In 2010 persistently disadvantaged pupils in areas 1 and 2 also experienced a smaller progress gap than disadvantaged pupils within the same areas. However, after 2013 persistently disadvantaged pupils saw their progress gap grow and it is now 1.2 months larger than for all disadvantaged pupils in areas 1 and 2.

To some extent the same is true in Opportunity Areas. In 2010 and 2011 persistently disadvantaged pupils in these areas made more progress than other disadvantaged pupils. But by 2015 the progress gap for persistently disadvantaged pupils was 1.7 months larger than for other disadvantaged pupils in these areas. However, this decline started before the changes to performance tables were implemented.

In contrast, persistently disadvantaged pupils have always made the least progress of all pupil groups in areas 5 and 6, but have seen the scale of that difference grow steadily since 2010.

Targeting support at disadvantaged students and priority areas

This analysis shows that we are right to continue focusing efforts towards improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils since in all areas, they experience the largest progress gap and in all areas this gap has been growing since 2013.

However, a rapid decline in progress is being experienced by all pupils in Opportunity Areas. This supports the government's decision to invest in improving outcomes for children in these locations, but also demonstrates the urgent need for change in these areas' schools.

Understanding the gaps

The variation in the timings and scale of changes to the progress gap over time in the different areas and also Opportunity Areas suggests that at least some of the underlying causes of these gaps may also vary between areas. Further research should focus on this question, since it is necessary to understand the root cause of these progress gaps if they are to be effectively addressed.

Persistently disadvantaged pupils also show a markedly different trend to other disadvantaged pupils within each area and to persistently disadvantaged pupils in other areas. This suggests that this group and the factors that have affected their progress in the last five years are not homogenous. Further investigation of the characteristics of persistently disadvantaged pupils in different areas and in the Opportunity Areas is needed, as is further research into the localised factors affecting their progress.

Section B: Leadership and Management in areas 1 to 6 and Opportunity Areas

Methodology

The Education Policy Institute completed a new analysis using Ofsted management information covering March 2010 to March 2016 and the area 1 to 6 and Opportunity Areas classifications released by the DfE. The Leadership and Management inspection rating of each school as of March 2016 was mapped to the inspection rating as of March 2010, to evaluate whether and how the rating had changed over a six year period. Each school was also mapped to DfE areas 1 to 6 and whether it was inside or outside an Opportunity Area.

All schools were included in the analysis: academies, maintained schools, PRUs and special schools. Where schools' URNs had changed as a consequence of academy sponsorship, the Ofsted rating of the previous school, under the previous URN, was linked to the current school's rating. However, sponsored academies that have not yet been inspected since conversion could not be included in the analysis as these schools do not have a current rating recorded in the March 2016 data. It is also worth noting that Outstanding schools are not routinely re-inspected unless they show changes in performance or other concerns are raised. Therefore some of these schools will have ratings from the same inspection in 2010 and 2016.

The analysis compared the proportion of schools getting a Good or Outstanding Ofsted rating for Leadership and Management to those getting Inadequate or Requires Improvement (or Satisfactory under the old inspection regime), split by areas 1 to 6 and Opportunity Areas. It also compared the proportion changing rating since March 2010 across the areas.

Findings

Q3. Have the Ofsted ratings for Leadership and Management improved or worsened between 2010 and 2016 in areas 5 and 6 and Opportunity Areas?
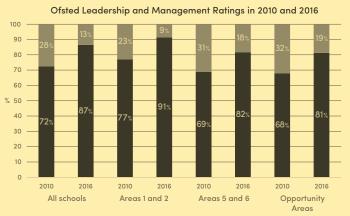
Performance in 2016

Schools in areas 5 and 6 are less likely to be rated Good or Outstanding for Leadership and Management. Nationally, 86% of schools have Good or Outstanding Leadership and Management. However, there is a strong imbalance in leadership across the country. In areas 5 and 6 only 81% of schools have Good or Outstanding Leadership and Management. This compares to 91% in areas 1 and 2 – a 10 percentage point difference.

The quality of Leadership and Management in Opportunity Areas is in line with areas 5 and 6: 81% of schools in Opportunity Areas have Good or Outstanding Leadership and Management.

Changes in the quality of Leadership and Management over time

Leadership and management has improved nationally. Across the country and in all the sub-areas of our analysis, the proportion of schools rated Good or Outstanding for Leadership and Management was higher in 2016 than in 2010. This is a very positive step given the importance of effective leaders for driving school improvement and sustaining good performance.

The chart below shows the Leadership and Management ratings for all schools with ratings available in both 2010 and 2016. As some schools with ratings available in 2016 do not have ratings available in 2010, the figures for 2016 differ slightly to those stated in the previous section but only by one to two percentage points.
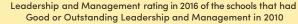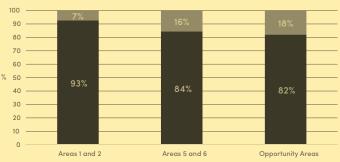
The scale of improvement in Leadership and Management has been greatest in areas 1 and 2. In areas 1 and 2, the proportion of schools with Inadequate or Requires Improvement Leadership and Management has reduced by 63% since 2010. In contrast, it has reduced by only 41% in areas 5 and 6 and 42% in Opportunity Areas.

The quality of Leadership and Management in schools in areas 5 and 6 is twice as likely to fall over time compared to areas 1 and 2. In areas 5 and 6, 16% of schools that were previously rated Good or Outstanding for Leadership in 2010 declined in their performance to Inadequate or Requires Improvement by March 2016. This compared to only 7% of schools in areas 1 and 2. Despite the national upward trend, schools in areas 5 and 6 with Requires Improvement or Inadequate leadership are less likely to improve their quality of leadership over time – only 76% of these schools improved to Good or Outstanding Leadership from 2010 to 2016 compared to 88% in areas 1 and 2.

The quality of Leadership and Management is most likely to fall in Opportunity Areas. Although on current measures Opportunity Areas do not have a substantially lower proportion of schools with Good or Outstanding Leadership and Management than the national average, 18% of schools with Good or Outstanding leadership when inspected in 2010 saw a decline in rating to Requires Improvement or Inadequate at their most recent inspection. If this trend continues, one in every five schools that currently has Good or Outstanding leadership will see a fall in their rating at the next inspection.

Leadership and Management rating in 2016 of the schools that had Good or Outstanding Leadership and Management in 2010

Ofsted Leadership and Management Ratings in 2010 and 2016

Summary and conclusions

School improvements are not equally distributed

Since 2010, the quality of Leadership and Management has improved in all areas. However, the greatest improvements have been seen in areas 1 and 2, where the proportion of schools with Inadequate or Requires Improvement Leadership reduced by 63% between 2010 and 2016. In contrast, in areas 5 and 6 and Opportunity Areas, it reduced by just over 40%. In addition, schools in these areas are most at risk of seeing their quality of leadership fall from Good or Outstanding to Inadequate or Requires Improvement over time.

It should be noted that Ofsted's ratings of Leadership and Management correlate closely with school performance. The progress gap analysis shows that alongside these reductions in the rating of Leadership and Management, children in areas 5 and 6 and in Opportunity Areas have not been making sufficient progress in the past five years. However, these separate analyses are not designed to test whether there is a causal link between these two trends, or to show the direction of any relationship.

The school improvement literature shows that effective Leadership and Management is one of the foundations for sustainable, positive change.[10,11,12,13] Good leaders establish a shared vision, a high expectation culture and develop and support their staff to improve teaching and learning over time.

Schools in areas 5 and 6 are less likely to have good Leadership and Management, which means that they have less capacity to deliver the improvements in performance required to close the progress gap. The quality of Leadership and Management in area 5 and 6 schools is also more at risk of declining from Good or Outstanding to Inadequate or Requires Improvement. Action is needed to increase the number of high quality leaders in these areas and to support those who are already in post, so they have enough leaders who are capable of driving the improvements in school performance so urgently needed.

Acknowledgements

[10]P Rudd, H Poet, G Featherstone, et al. *Evaluation of City Challenge Leadership Strategies: overview report.* Slough: NFER. 2011.

[11]K Seashore Louis, K Leithwood, K Wahlstrom, S Anderson. *Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning.* Washington, DC: Wallace Foundation. 2010.

[12]E Thoonen, P Sleegers, F Oort, T Peetsma. "Building school-wide capacity for improvement: the role of leadership, school organizational conditions, and teacher factors", School Effectiveness and School Improvement (2012) Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 441-460.

[13]A Hill, L Mellon, B Laker, J Goddard. The one type of leader who can turn around a failing school. *Harvard Business Review,* 20 Oct 2016.

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