

Inequality in Education and what to do about it

That the UK is one of the least equal countries in the developed world is not in dispute. By any of the standard measures of income inequality, the UK is less equal than almost every member of the EU. Only the USA and Israel are significantly less equal.

It's also clear that – according to PISA - the correlation between educational inequality and income is greater in England than in many other developed countries. The real issue in England has been for some time not performance at the highest levels but underachievement at the other end of the scale.

Educational inequality in England takes many forms. There is inequality amongst different ethnic groups, by gender, by geography and by social class. They come together in varying combinations across the country.

The national GCSE data is one indicator of how inequality works for different groups of students.

From <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/revised-gcse-and-equivalent-results-in-england-2015-to-2016> where there is a lot more data.

	Attainment 8	Progress 8	5+ A* to C with Eng & Ma: change from 2010 to 2016
Boys	47.7	-0.16	+0.8
Girls	52.3	+0.11	+3.7
White British	49.7	-0.09	+2.4
Indian	57.0	+0.47	+0.2
Pakistani	48.5	+0.13	+2.2
Bangladeshi	52.1	+0.33	+7.3
Black Caribbean	45.4	-0.15	+0.7
Black African	50.3	+0.34	+3.4
Chinese	62.4	+0.68	+1.9
English 1 st lang	50.0	-0.09	+2.5
English not 1 st lang	49.9	+0.39	+2.1
FSM	39.0	-0.46	+2.2
Not FSM	51.6	+0.4	+2.3

	Progress 8 FSM pupils	Progress 8 non FSM pupils	Difference
White British	-0.68	-0.03	0.65
Indian	+0.24	+0.49	0.25
Pakistani	-0.04	+0.18	0.22
Bangladeshi	+0.25	+0.36	0.11
Black Caribbean	-0.34	-0.09	0.23
Black African	+0.25	+0.37	0.14
Chinese	+0.64	+0.68	0.04

	No of children in need per 10000 children	Progress 8	% of schools good or better in Ofsted
England	337.7	-0.03	
North East	441.6	-0.16	87
North West	380.1	-0.15	91
Yorkshire	332.8	-0.03	88
East Midlands	299.5	-0.14	87
West Midlands	359.2	-0.18	87
East	297.0	+0.03	90
Inner London	429.1	+0.17	94
Outer London	312.4	+0.16	
South East	302.9	+0.02	90
South West	321.5	-0.05	91

These are just a sample of the statistics that exist. There are many others that could be included as well as all the other kinds of bias that creep into the system and damage the prospects of many young people?

Questions:

- Which groups of young people should we focus on when seeking to address inequality?
- Social mobility and equality – are they the same or different? Which is more important?
- What are the root causes of inequality in educational outcomes?
- Is school effectiveness a significant factor in producing educational inequality?
- What contribution can education realistically make to reducing inequality in society?

The Tory agenda:

- formal education as early as possible
- regular testing to identify pupils falling behind
- an academic curriculum for all (EBacc) to 16
- harder examinations and less course and project work.
- more selection so bright kids from poor backgrounds can succeed.
- separate academic and technical pathways at 16
- identify schools perceived to be failing and change their management.

Will this work? If not, what is our alternative?