

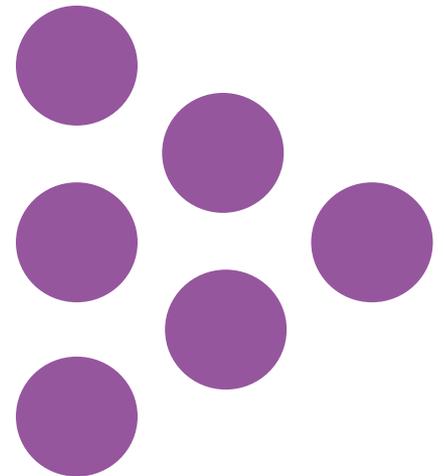
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# Attainment in the wake of COVID-19 and priorities for recovery

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Westminster Education Forum Conference Jan 11 2022

Dr Angela Donkin



## Latest findings on attainment



# Key Stage 1 – some recovery in Maths

By the end of the school year 20/21

- Year 1 children remained three months behind where we would expect them to be in reading.
- Some evidence of recovery in maths, with Year 1 children being only one month behind their pre-pandemic peers
- Year 2 pupils were still two months behind in reading at the end of the summer term,
- Recovery to above pre-pandemic standards in maths.

*NFER December 2021. : Impact of school closures and subsequent support strategies on attainment in Key Stage 1*

# KS1 attainment gap remains wider

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There was a substantial gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers, which remained at seven months by the summer term

However the disadvantage gap closed slightly for Year 1 pupils in reading and maths between the spring and summer terms.

*NFER December 2021. : Impact of school closures and subsequent support strategies on attainment in Key Stage 1*

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# A little more on reading...

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- In Autumn 2020, 5.2% of those in year 2 could not engage with the reading test as compared with 1.6% pre-pandemic.
  - By spring 2021 this had risen to 7.2%.
  - For year 1 children in spring 2021 figures were 5.0% compared to 2.6% pre-pandemic and rose to 5.8% by the summer.
  - At every sweep of the study, including the 2019 Key Stage 1 tests that were taken by Year 2s in the summer, the attainment gap was widest for reading at the bottom of the ability distribution.
  - All the additional help -teachers, volunteers and older children sitting in close contact reading together - used in schools to help young children struggling to learn to read will have disappeared overnight with the pandemic.

# Primary all years – some recovery in maths and reading

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## End of school year 20/21

- Catch-up for primary aged pupils in reading with the learning loss for this cohort improving by around 1.3 months resulting in an average learning loss by the summer term of around 0.9 months.
- Catch-up for primary aged pupils in mathematics with the learning loss for this cohort improving by around 1.2 months resulting in an estimate of learning loss by the summer term of around 2.2 months.

*DFE October 21 Understanding Progress in the 2020/21 Academic Year Findings from the summer term and summary of all previous findings.*

# The attainment gap

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By the summer term, the additional gap in learning loss between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers in reading was around 0.4 months for primary aged pupils and around 1.6 months for secondary aged pupils. The gap in mathematics for primary aged pupils was around half a month.

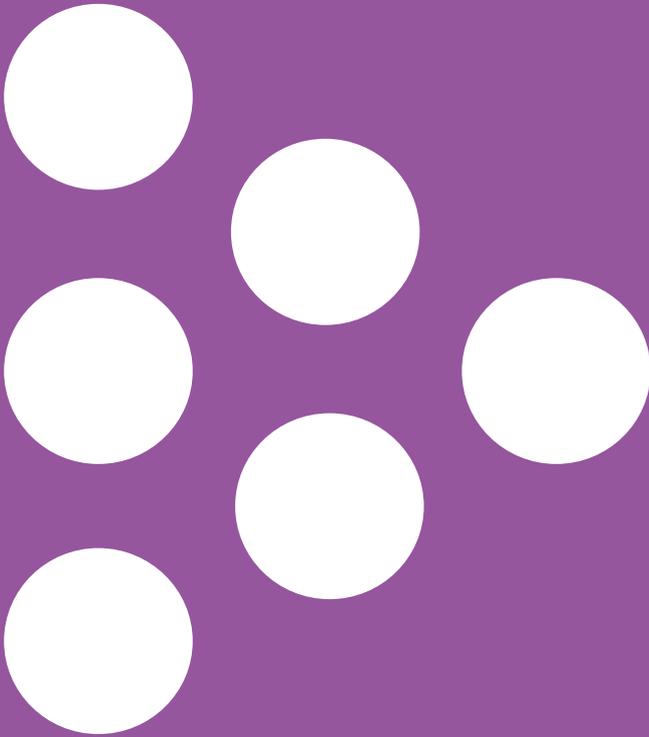
*DFE October 21 Understanding Progress in the 2020/21 Academic Year Findings from the summer term and summary of all previous findings.*

# Secondary Schools – a little recovery in English

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- Analysis for secondary aged pupils is more limited due to sample sizes and robust estimates can only be determined in reading.
  - By the summer term, secondary aged pupils had caught up only slightly, resulting in an estimate of learning loss by summer term of around 1.2 months.

*DFE October 21 Understanding Progress in the 2020/21 Academic Year Findings from the summer term and summary of all previous findings.*

# Priorities for recovery



# 1. Keep schools open – draft in more cover now

Staff absences through Covid at London hospitals triple during December

*Independent, 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec 21.*

Increased risk was seen in nurses (aRR=1.90 [1.40-2.40], AF=47%); doctors (1.74 [1.26-2.40], 42%); carers (2.18 [1.63-2.92], 54%); **teachers (primary = 1.94 [1.44-2.61], 48%; secondary = 1.64, [1.23-2.17], 39%)**, and warehouse and process/plant workers (1.58 [1.20-2.09], 37%) compared to both office-based professional occupations (reported above) and all other occupations. Differential risk was apparent in the earlier phases (Feb 2020 - May 2021) and attenuated later (June - October 2021) for most groups, although **teachers demonstrated persistently elevated risk.**

*UCL. Virus Watch preliminary findings on 20th Dec 2021*

# 3. Then prioritise the following in school:

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- Focus on getting **young children to learn to read**
- Focus on **supporting recovery for disadvantaged pupils** and ensure funding follows the higher need these children have.
- Use **evidenced based programs and support** available. Tutoring does have a strong evidence base for instance.
- **Digital inclusion**, ensure all children have access to the digital devices and broadband they need.
- **Improve children's mental health**. We know schools with high numbers of disadvantaged students are reporting a lack of mental health support for children. Improving children's mental health will have a large impact on educational attainment

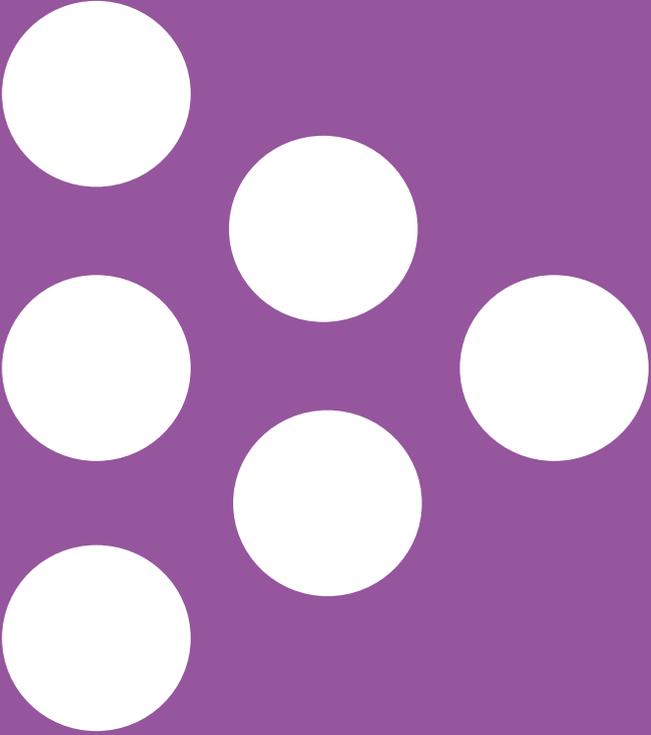
## 2. Then get the children to attend

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- 25% of primary age pupils and 35% of secondary age pupils had missed at least 10% of sessions by early Dec last term.
- Almost 50% of disadvantaged pupils in Years 10 and 11 had missed at least 10% of sessions compared to 35% of non disadvantaged pupils.
- 20 percent of disadvantaged pupils have had missed 10% of sessions based on unauthorised and authorised (excluding illness) absence compared to 6% of non disadvantaged pupils.

*FFT Education Data Lab, December 2021, Exploring Persistent absence*

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# Evidence for excellence in education

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