



Hard to Reach: An Appraisal of Opportunities and Outcomes for Hard-to-Reach Students in the English Academies System

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Executive Summary

The education system in England has experienced three epochs of reform since the Second World War. The three stages of reform have produced the tripartite, comprehensive and academies systems of education. These alternative structures diverge in their characteristics but have all been determined by ambitions to improve opportunities and outcomes for students. Central to the ambitions of representatives and non-political stakeholders has been the achievement of equality of opportunity within the education system. Indeed, countless stakeholders have stated that education is the only ‘silver bullet’ available to render intergenerational underachievement and enhance social mobility. The successes and failures of each of the three educational models have been examined across a range of academic fields. Yet, seldom have these examinations focused on the most hard-to-reach populations, making this an essential area for further exploration. This report has chosen to focus on the opportunities available to and attainment of hard-to reach students within the English academies system. A selection of indicators and variables were selected from secondary governmental data to measure the relationship between hard-to reach populations and educational outcomes. Using bivariate analysis methods, the opportunities available to hard-to-reach students and their attainment was compared against multi-academy trusts with the highest and lowest percentage of these populations. The results demonstrate that there was a strong correlation between the percentage of disadvantaged students in each multi-academy trust and the attainment of good educational outcomes. A more mixed set of outcomes was found for trusts with high percentages of SEN students. The data demonstrates the need for the government to build on previous work to improve opportunities and outcomes for hard-to-reach students.

Key Findings

- The academies system has been found to achieve mixed outcomes for hard-to-reach students.
- Multi-academy trusts with higher populations of disadvantaged students were found to achieve lower levels of attainment at the secondary level of education.
- Multi-academy trusts with higher populations of SEN students were found to achieve mixed outcomes at primary and secondary levels of education.

Introduction

Representatives in the UK have endeavoured to create an education system that increases opportunities and outcomes for all students. Indeed, the evolution of educational models throughout the last fifty years has been stimulated through a recognition by policymakers of the need to increase standards and promote better knowledge accumulation amongst younger populations. The countless reforms undertaken in the education sector have slowly increased standards across the board with individuals born in the current century more likely to have access to quality learning environments than previous generations. Nevertheless, a common trend throughout all stages of educational reform has been the lower attainment of hard-to-reach students. The previous literature and data have identified two populations of students that face substantial barriers in achieving positive outcomes in their education. These cohorts include deprived students and students with special educational needs.

The [Joseph Rountree Foundation \(2010\)](#) found that there was a 25 per cent difference between those on free school meals and those eligible in the attainment of five GCSEs at grades A to C. The [Department of Education's \(2015\)](#) own research demonstrated clear disparities between students entitled and unentitled to free school meals in the attainment of 5 GCSEs (including English and Maths). The data collected by the DoE suggested that there was an overall 26.7 per cent difference between these two cohorts, reflecting the findings of JRF. Other studies have chosen to focus on SEN students. [Parsons and Platt \(2016\)](#) examined the attainment of students with special educational needs in England. They found that students with special educational needs tended to achieve much lower educational outcomes than their peers. These results were reflective of the findings of the Department of Education which showed lower educational attainment amongst students with special educational needs compared to other pupils between key stages 1 and 4.

It is clear from the previous scholarship that deprived students and those with special educational needs face substantial challenges in achieving positive educational outcomes. A more comprehensive examination of the pre-existing scholarship will now be undertaken prior to the presentation of our own findings.

A Review of the Literature and Data

The overall number of academies has grown exponentially across England over the last two decades. The first city academies were introduced in 2002 under New Labour in an effort to improve standards and outcomes in urban areas. The 'city' element was dropped but academisation continued with over 70 new institutions created under Labour's three terms in office. The new Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government introduced the Academies Act 2010 which enabled all maintained schools to apply for academy status. This legislation triggered a further expansion of the academy network with the current number of establishments around 9041. A total of 2539 multi-academy trusts now incorporate primary and secondary academies or both. The expansion of this model of education was initiated with the ambition to improve standards and outcomes for all students including disadvantaged and SEN pupils. Yet, the literature and data on academisation suggests that the model has attained mixed-outcomes since its insertion.

The Data: Primary Schools (Academies) and Attainment

The most recent data collected on primary schools (academies) suggests that more than half of students are at the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined). There are however clear differences between primary schools based on their academy status. For example, whilst converter academies and free schools have succeeded in attaining higher educational outcomes than local authority establishments, sponsored schools continue to record lower levels of attainment compared to the former ([UK Government, 2022](#)).

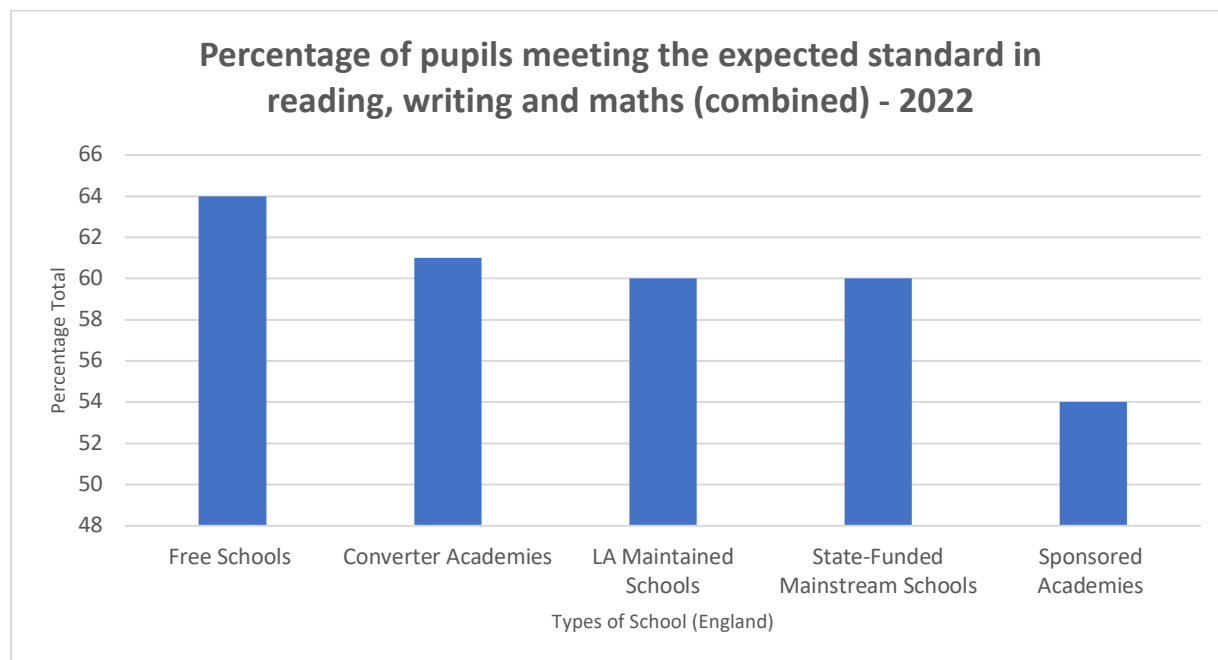


Chart 1: Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (combined) - 2022. Source: UK Government, 2022.

Indeed, similar disparities have been recorded for hard-to-reach students between 2019 and 2022¹. In 2019, a total of 51 per cent of disadvantaged students attained the expected standard in reading, writing and maths. Alas, only 43 per cent of the same student population have achieved reflective outcomes in 2022. For SEN students², a total of 25 per cent of pupils attained the expected standard in the three core areas compared to 21 per cent in 2022.

¹ Disadvantaged students, SEN students and EASL students

² Students with EHC Plan and SEN Support

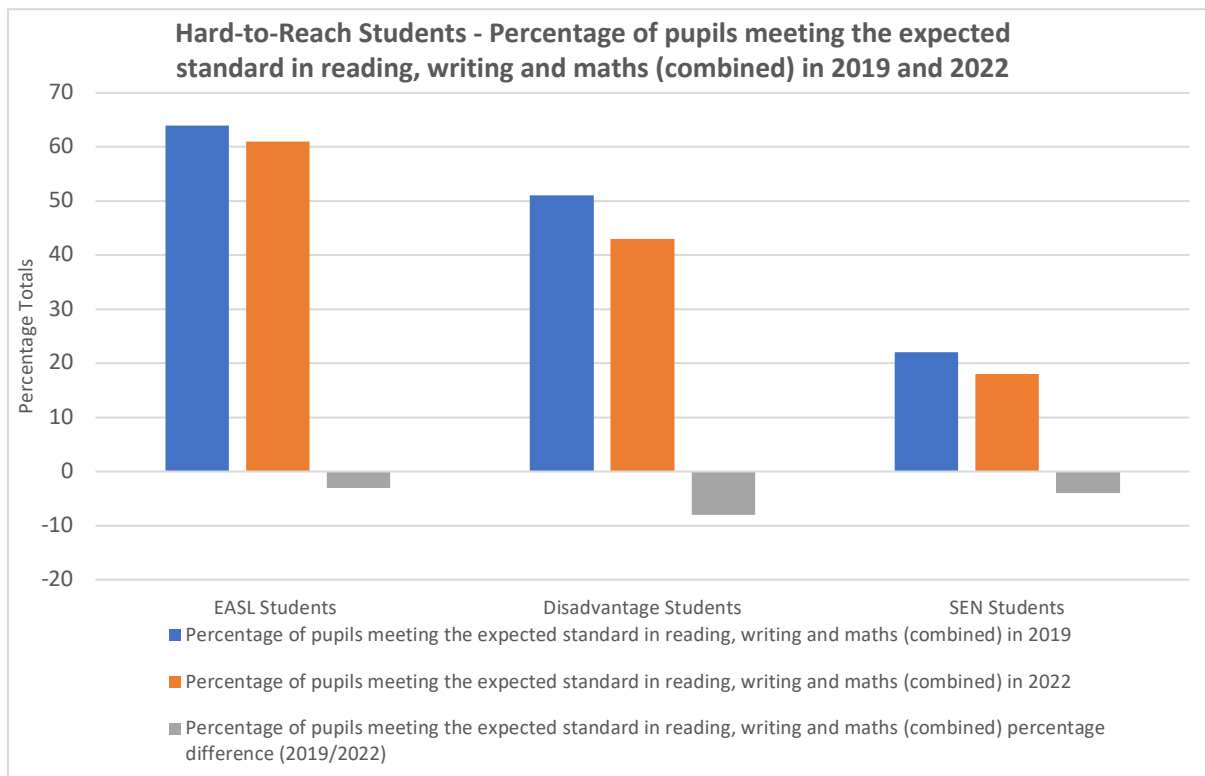


Chart 2: Percentage of pupils meeting expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined (2019-2022) - Hard to Reach. Source: UK Government, 2022).

The Data: Secondary Schools (Academies) and Attainment

The most recent data on secondary schools demonstrates a more promising set of results with a 4.9 per cent increase in the total number of students attaining the highest grades at GCSE level. The total number of students achieving grade 5 or above in English and Maths has also increased by 6.4 per cent since 2018/2019. Such successes demonstrate the usefulness of academisation at the secondary school level. Nevertheless, there has been a fall of 1.3 per cent in the total number of students being entered into the EBacc over the same time period but grades of those taking the EBacc has increased by around 0.2 percentage points. The outcomes recorded at the secondary level of education can be acknowledged as much better compared to those recorded at the primary level.

For hard-to-reach students, the data demonstrates a more dire set of outcomes with the attainment gap between this population and others widening. The gap between disadvantaged and other students has increased by 0.14 per cent since 2018/2019, whilst the total percentage of this population being entered in the EBacc has decreased by 0.6 per cent. The gap between SEN and non-SEN students also remains unacceptably high with a 37.4 per cent difference between the two populations in the attainment of English and Maths at grade 5 or above. There was also a 29.3 per cent difference between the two populations in the number of students being entered into the EBacc. Nevertheless, the gap has reduced by 1.7 per cent since 2018/2019.

The most recent data demonstrates a diverse set of outcomes with certain hard-to-reach groups succeeding more than others. Based on the UK Government's most recent data, the main groups of concern are disadvantaged and SEN students. The literature on both groups will now be considered against the data discussed in this section.

The Literature: Disadvantaged Students

There has been a vast amount of scholarship undertaken on the relationship between academisation and disadvantage students. Scholars have endeavoured to measure the success of the model in promoting social mobility amongst this population. [Gorard \(2014\)](#) examined the relationship between academies, pupil outcomes and social segregation. To measure this, he carried out a secondary analysis of official datasets. He found no evidence of higher performance in academies compared to non-academies. He also suggested that converter academies were linked to segregation, basing his claim on the fact that there was a reduction in the number of disadvantaged pupils' once academy status was achieved. [Barker and Hoskins \(2017\)](#) found similar findings in their investigation into whether academies could overcome family backgrounds and improve social mobility. Using an interpretative qualitative research design, they found that academies had little impact on the improvement of social mobility amongst this population and did not render the effects of family background. The findings of Barker and Hoskin must however be taken with caution due to the low number of cases examined. The generalisability of these cases was defended by both authors due to their reflectivity of what the government claimed to be the perfect environment to foster social mobility. Nevertheless, the small number of cases renders the strength of these findings and their broader application to the academies system.

Extensive evaluations of the academies scheme and its outcomes have been undertaken by [Eyles et al \(2016\)](#) and [Hutchings and Francis \(2017\)](#) who found more positive results. Hutchings and Francis examined the impact of academy chains on low-income students through their analysis and evaluation of outcomes at key stage 2 and key stage 4. Two analysis groups made up of academy chains with primary, secondary or both types of schools were constructed with data from the national pupil database used to examine student outcomes. The results from their study suggested that certain academy chains were improving outcomes for disadvantage students whilst others were producing below average levels of attainment. The determinants of these differences may be linked to different standards of leadership or other factors. Needless to say, an education system should endeavour to achieve the best outcomes possible for all abilities of student. A more positive set of outcomes were found by Eyles et al (2016) in their study on school reforms and pupil performance. They measured the influence of academisation on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in England at key stage 4 and above using administrative data and repeated cross-sections of quasi-natural experiments. The results showed that the outcomes of disadvantaged students were enhanced after individual schools

were converted to academies. In their discussion, they argued that increased autonomy and flexibility in the curriculum influenced this set of positive outcomes. Their results reflect the falling attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The varied results found by the four studies examined demonstrate the disparities between individual academy schools and chains in regard to the attainment of disadvantage pupils. The causes of such diversity between individual academies and chains could be linked to different standards of leadership or resource availability in local areas. Whatever the causation, efforts need to be made to reduce the gap between disadvantaged students and their more affluent peers particularly during this early period after the pandemic.

The Literature: Special Educational Needs Students

The scholarship examining the relationship between academisation and students with special educational needs is limited but a small number of scholars have endeavoured to highlight the successes and failures of the academies model in promoting positive outcomes amongst this population. The small body of literature has highlighted some of the core access and attainment issues faced by SEN students.

Black et al (2019) examined the impact of academisation on school composition with a focus on the SEN student population. They used school-level data from the national pupil database to understand the inclusiveness of academies. Their research found a universal decrease in SEN pupils across the different types of academies with sponsored academies recording the highest fall in student numbers. The dramatic fall in SEN students in sponsored academies was linked to the pursuit of better educational outcomes. Indeed, Liu et al (2020) has similarly claimed that decreases in SEN student numbers can be linked to reputational concerns and anxieties around academic attainment scores. Their research found that some sponsored academies enacted a mass exodus of SEN students prior to key stage 4, but this approach was not uniform across the wider academies system. This is a concerning finding that demonstrates a failure amongst certain schools to include SEN students beyond the primary stages of education.

Daniels et al (2019) found similar evidence of exclusionary measures being operationalised by certain types of academies. Using data from the Excluded Lives project and 27 semi-structured interviews with prominent stakeholders in the education field, they identified multiple causes of exclusion. The three main causes of exclusion identified were ethos and culture, marketisation and school governance. The ethos of individual academies and chains was highlighted as a central determinant of inclusionary and exclusionary practices. Some academies were perceived as seeing SEN students as a barrier to educational excellence whilst others endeavoured to meet their needs. The ethos and culture of each school must promote the inclusion of students with SEN needs and provide them with an equal opportunity to flourish. Yet, it seems that the leadership teams in some academies are not promoting such an ethos and in turn, excluding those with SEN requirements. Statutory guidance is in place to prevent the unlawful exclusions of those with SEN, but individual schools must make a continuous effort to ingrain such principles into their environmental cultures. The final determinant of exclusionary practices identified by these scholars was marketisation, or more specifically, the measurement of educational outcomes. They argue that increased measurement and

competition between individual academies has fostered a culture of exclusion. The use of indicators and variables to compare school outcomes is not a bad thing per se but the appraisal of these scholars seems to suggest that they are encouraging exclusionary tactics.

More recently, the UK Government has introduced focused measures which establish the educational outcomes of SEN students in each academy. This more concentrated view of school performance is beneficial in encouraging academies to invest in their SEN students.

Concerns around the support given to students with certain characteristics were aired much earlier within the academisation process. Goodman and Burton (2012) suggested that increased measurement of educational outcomes would disproportionately impact the attainment of SEN students. The evidence collected since this intervention does seem to suggest that disparities continue to exist between SEN and non-SEN students. Yet, it is not entirely clear whether increased measurement is the direct cause of unequal attainment. The introduction of measures that encourage schools to focus in on SEN students may indeed be a means to improve outcomes for this population.

Methodology

This research has endeavoured to provide a clear examination of the relationship between hard-to-reach pupils and multi-academy trust outcomes. A selection of indicators and variables have been selected to examine the relationship between students classed as disadvantaged and having special educational needs.

Selection of Cases

A selection of multi-academy trusts was chosen based on them having either the highest or lowest percentage of students representing one of the hard-to-reach characteristics (disadvantaged and special educational needs). Twenty multi-academy trusts (top 10 highest and top 10 lowest) were selected for each characteristic. The selection of trusts for each characteristic varied with some trusts having high numbers of one characteristic but low numbers of the other.

| Selection of Cases (Disadvantage Students – Primary Education) | Selection of Cases (Disadvantage Students - Secondary Education) |
|---|---|
| Laidlaw Schools Trust | City of London Academies Trust |
| Wise Owl Trust | Northern Schools Trust |
| Paradigm Trust | White Rose Academies |
| Co-Operative Academies Trust | The Co-operative Academies Trust |
| The Dean Trust | E-Act |
| DRB Ignite Multi Academy Trust | Fylde Coast Academy Trust |
| Tees Valley Education | Ark Schools |
| Bright Futures Educational Trust | Grace Academy |
| Wise Academies | Oasis Community Learning |
| Transform Trust | Anglian Learning |
| Bradgate Education Partnership | Guildford Education Partnership |
| The Fallibroome Trust | Russell Education Trust |
| The Rutland Learning Trust | Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership |
| Cheshire Academies Trust | Castle School Education Trust |
| Chulmleigh Academy Trust | The Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust |
| Frassati Catholic Academy Trust | The Howard Partnership Trust |
| The Good Shepherd Multi Academy Trust | East Midlands Education Trust |
| Xavier Catholic Education Trust | The Spencer Academies Trust |
| Excalibur Academies Trust | The Athelstan Trust |
| Lighthouse Schools Partnership | Education and Leadership Trust |

| Selection of Cases (SEN Students – Primary Education) | Selection of Cases (SEN Students – Secondary Education) |
|---|---|
| The Mead Academy Trust | Active Learning Education Trust |
| North Carr Collaborative Academy | Loxford School Trust Limited |
| Brighter Futures Academy Trust | Greenwood Academies Trust |
| The Harmony Trust LTD | The Great Schools Trust |
| Dixons Academies Charitable Trust | The Cardinal Hume Academies Trust |
| Fylde Coast Academy Trust | Fort Pitt Thomas Aveling Academies |
| Enfield Learning Trust | The Dean Trust |
| The Diocese of Leicester Academies Trust | Guildford Education Partnership |
| Diamond Learning Partnership Trust | Community Academies Trust |
| Venturers Trust | University of Chester Academies Trust |
| The Village Academy | Tollbar Multi Academy Trust |
| Lighthouse Schools Partnership | East Midlands Education Trust |
| Painsley Catholic Academy | The Gorse Academies Trust |
| Avanti Schools Trust | Brook Learning Trust |
| Warriner Multi Academy Trust | Nova Education Trust |
| Rosedale Hewens Academy Trust | The Rosedale Hewens Academy Trust |
| Paradigm Trust | The Thinking Schools Academy Trust |
| Christ The King Catholic Collegiate | Inspiration Trust |
| St John Paul II Multi Academy Company | Carmel Education Trust |
| Outwood Grange Academies Trust | Redhill Academy Trust |

Indicators and Variables

A selection of indicators were selected to measure the opportunities and outcomes experienced by hard-to-reach students within multi academy trusts. The main indicators selected varied based on the stage of education examined. For primary education, only the outcomes of multi-academy trusts were measured. The indicator used to measure outcomes within multi-academy trusts providing primary education was *the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in the combined reading, writing and maths measure*. For secondary education, the opportunities and outcomes experienced by students were measured. The opportunities afforded to students were measured by *the percentage of students entering for the English Baccalaureate*. The outcomes of students were measured by *the percentage of pupils achieving EBacc at grade 5 or above*. These measures provide a clear view of how multi-academy trusts with the highest and lowest percentages of hard-to-reach students are performing.

Data

Data was collected from the *Get Information on Schools* comparison tool on the selected multi academy trusts. The data was inputted into Microsoft Excel before being transported to the IBM SPSS Statistics 25 software for further analyse. The multi-academy trusts were then sorted

in the SPSS software by the total percentages of each hard-to reach student group. The selected measurement variables and the results for each of them were then inputted alongside the multi-academy trusts. Each label and measurement were then tested for a relationship using a bivariate analysis.

Limitations

The main limitation to this research is that the evidence used is from the 2018/2019 collection of data. The reason for this is that new data for 2021/2022 was not released at the time this research was undertaken and the results for 2020/2021 or the previous year were not perceived to be accurate or fair measures of performance due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Hypothesis

H1: There will be a clear correlation between the total number of disadvantaged and SEN students in each academy trust and educational attainment.

H2: The relationship between the variables will be most prominent in secondary education with less students being submitted to EBacc subjects and attaining 5 EBacc subject grades at 5/c and above in multi-academy trusts with higher percentages of disadvantaged and SEN students.

Results and Discussion

The results and discussion section have been divided into two segments with the first presenting the data for primary education and the second showcasing the outcomes for secondary education. The two sections have been broken down into three sub-sections which present the data for individual hard-to-reach populations. Overall, the findings demonstrate variations in access and outcomes for hard-to-reach students.

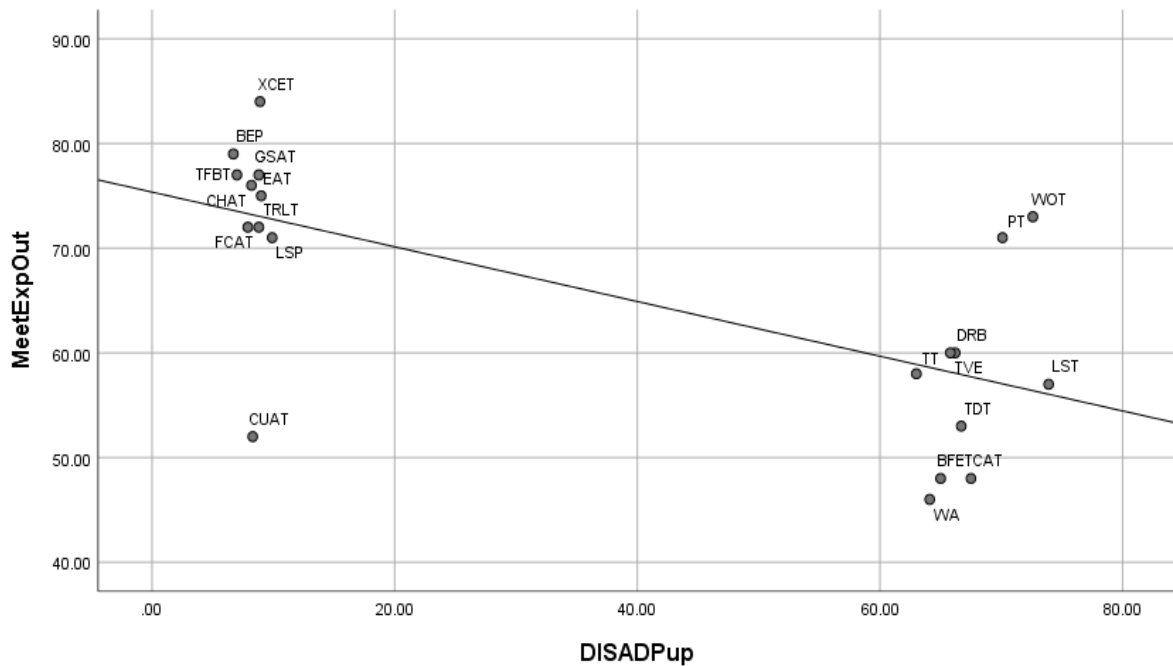
Primary Education – hard to reach students and the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard in the combined reading, writing and maths measure.

This section outlines the results for tests carried out on the relationship between multi-academy trusts with the highest and lowest percentage of disadvantage and SEN students, and the proportion of students attaining the expected combined standard at the primary level.

Primary Education – The Relationship Between the Percentage of Disadvantaged Students and the Percentage of Students Meeting the Expected Combined Standard

The first test undertaken examined the relationship between multi-academy trusts with the highest and lowest proportion of disadvantage students at primary level and the percentage of pupils meeting the expected combined standard in reading, writing and maths.

The Relationship Between the Percentage of Disadvantaged Students (MAT's Primary with Highest [top 10] and Lowest [bottom 10] Included) and the Percentage of Students Meeting Expected Standard



The results show that there was a moderate negative correlation between the two variables which means that there was some relationship but other factors may have influenced the overall outcomes. The relationship is negative, meaning that as the percentage of disadvantaged students increased, the overall proportion of pupils attaining the expected combined standard decreased. Nevertheless, the relationship is only moderate, suggesting that there was some randomness in the overall results. For example, the Wise Owl Trust had a high percentage of disadvantaged students attending their schools but the total number of pupils attaining the required standard in reading, writing and maths remained high. Other trusts with a similar percentage of disadvantage students did not attain the same outcomes, representing randomness within the data.

Correlations

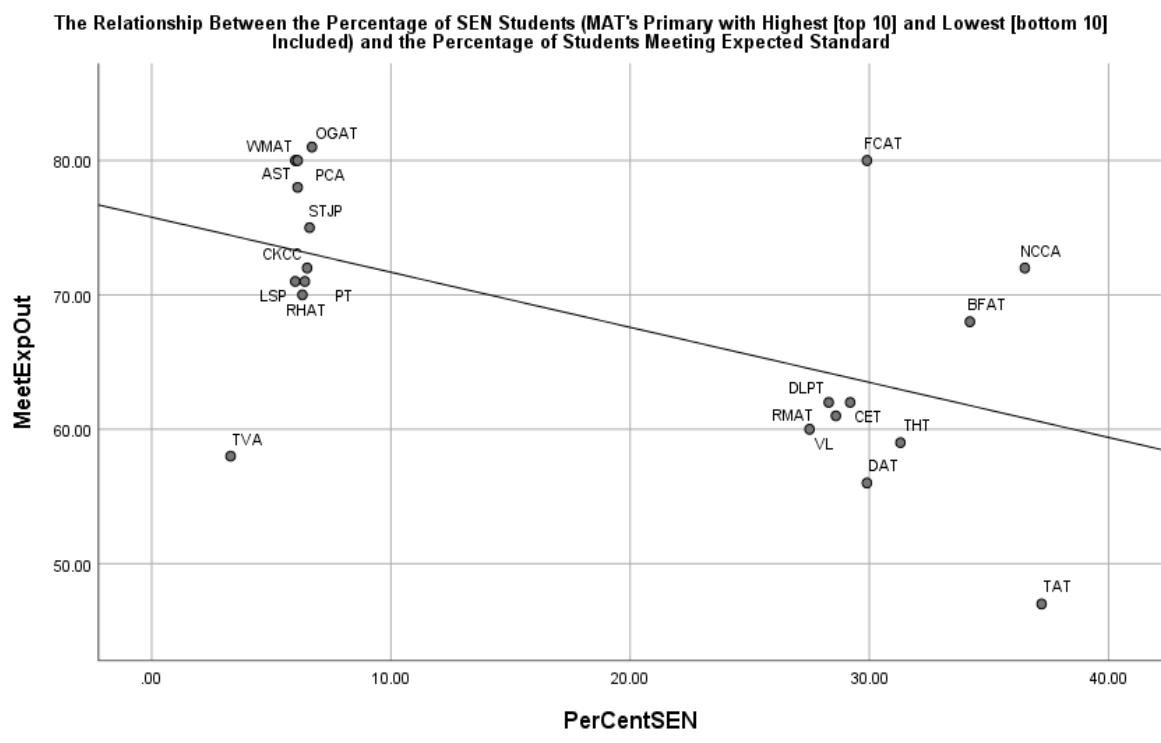
| | | MeetExpOut | DISADPup |
|------------|---------------------|------------|----------|
| MeetExpOut | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.666** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .001 |
| | N | 20 | 20 |
| DISADPup | Pearson Correlation | -.666** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 | |
| | N | 20 | 20 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Primary Education – The Relationship Between the Percentage of SEN Students and the Percentage of Students Meeting the Expected Combined Standard

The second test undertaken examined the relationship between multi-academy trusts with the highest and lowest percentages of SEN students at the primary level and the overall proportion of pupils meeting the combined standard.

The results show that there was a moderate negative correlation between the two variables which means that there was some relationship but other factors may have influenced the overall outcomes. Yet again, the relationship is negative, meaning that as the percentage of SEN students increased, the proportion of students attaining the expected combined standard in reading, writing and maths decreased. Yet, there is some randomness in the results with certain trusts with high percentages of SEN students still achieving good outcomes. For example, the North Carr Collaborative Academy achieved over a 70 per cent success rate in students meeting the expected combined standard and also had a high percentage of SEN pupils. Alternatively, other trusts with high numbers of SEN students had percentages of between 50 and 60, representing levels of randomness within the results.



Correlations

| | MeetExpOut | PerCentSEN |
|------------|---------------------|------------|
| MeetExpOut | Pearson Correlation | 1 |
| | | -.563** |

| | | | |
|------------|---------------------|---------|------|
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .010 |
| | N | 20 | 20 |
| PerCentSEN | Pearson Correlation | -.563** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .010 | |
| | N | 20 | 20 |

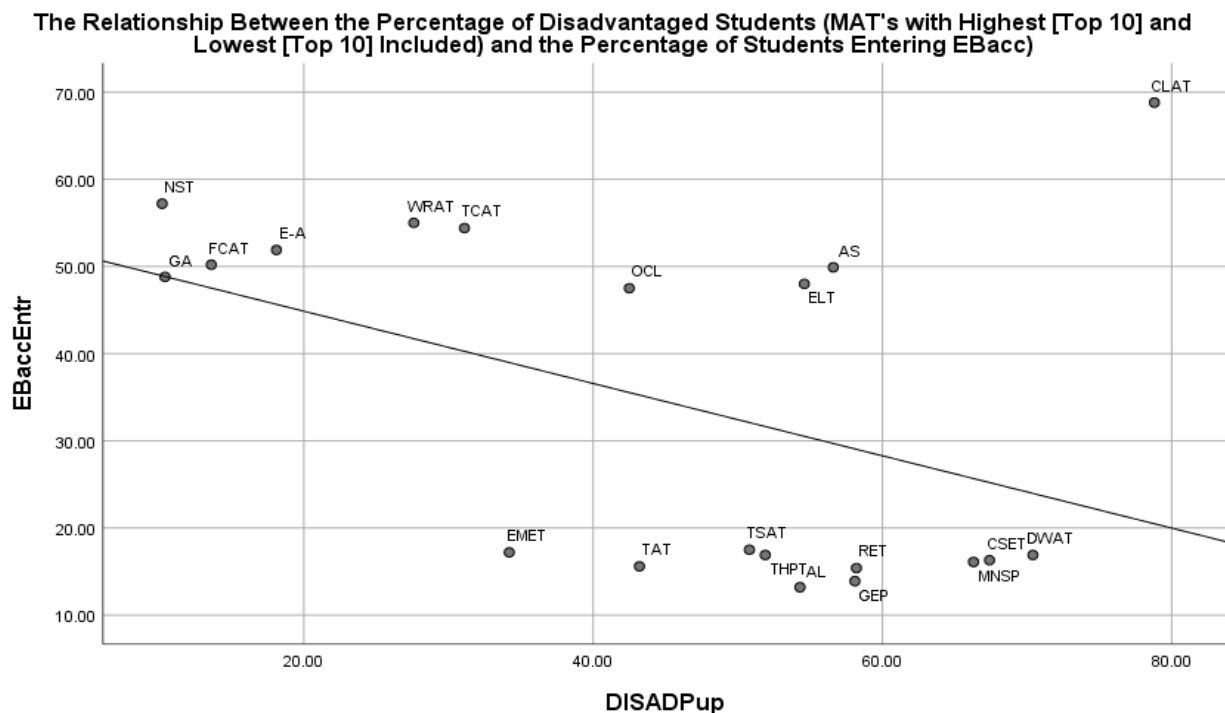
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Secondary Education – hard to reach students and the percentage of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate.

This section outlines the results for tests carried out on the relationship between multi-academy trusts with the highest and lowest percentage of disadvantage and SEN students, and the proportion of students being entered and attaining 5 EBacc subject grades at 5/c or above.

Secondary Education – The Relationship Between the Percentage of Disadvantaged Students and the Percentage of Students Entering the English Baccalaureate

The first test undertaken for secondary education examined the relationship between multi-academy trusts with the highest and lowest percentages of disadvantaged students and the proportion of students entering the EBacc.



The results demonstrate that there was a weak negative correlation between the two variables which means that the relationship was only minor. The minor relationship recorded was negative, meaning that as the percentage of disadvantage students increased, the number of pupils entered for the EBacc decreased. It must be stressed however that this relationship was only minor and lacks significance.

Correlations

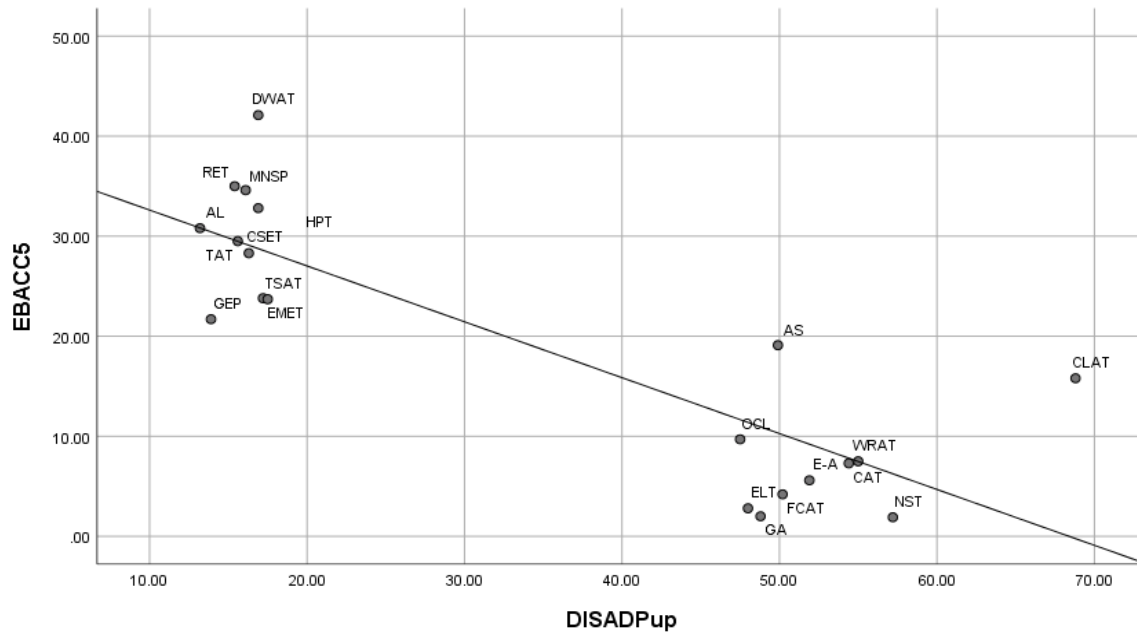
| | | DISADPup | EBaccEntr |
|-----------|---------------------|----------|-----------|
| DISADPup | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.439 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .053 |
| | N | 20 | 20 |
| EBaccEntr | Pearson Correlation | -.439 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .053 | |
| | N | 20 | 20 |

Secondary Education - The Relationship Between the Percentage of Disadvantaged Students and the Percentage of Students Achieving 5 EBacc Grades at 5/c or Above

The second test undertaken for this sub-section examined the relationship between multi-academy trusts with the highest and lowest percentage of disadvantaged students and the number of pupils achieving 5 EBacc subject grades at grade 5 or above.

The results demonstrate that there was a strong negative correlation between the two variables, meaning that the relationship was significant. The significant relationship is negative, meaning that as the percentage of disadvantaged students increased, the proportion of pupils attaining 5 EBacc subject grades at 5 or above substantially decreased. The Pearson Correlation shows a score of $-.843$ which signifies the significance of the relationship.

The Relationship Between the Percentage of Disadvantaged Students (MAT's with Highest [top 10] and Lowest [bottom 10] Included) and the Percentage of Students Acheiving 5 EBacc Subject Grades at 5/C or Above



Correlations

| | | EBACC5 | DISADPup |
|----------|---------------------|---------|----------|
| EBACC5 | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.843** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 20 | 20 |
| DISADPup | Pearson Correlation | -.843** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 20 | 20 |

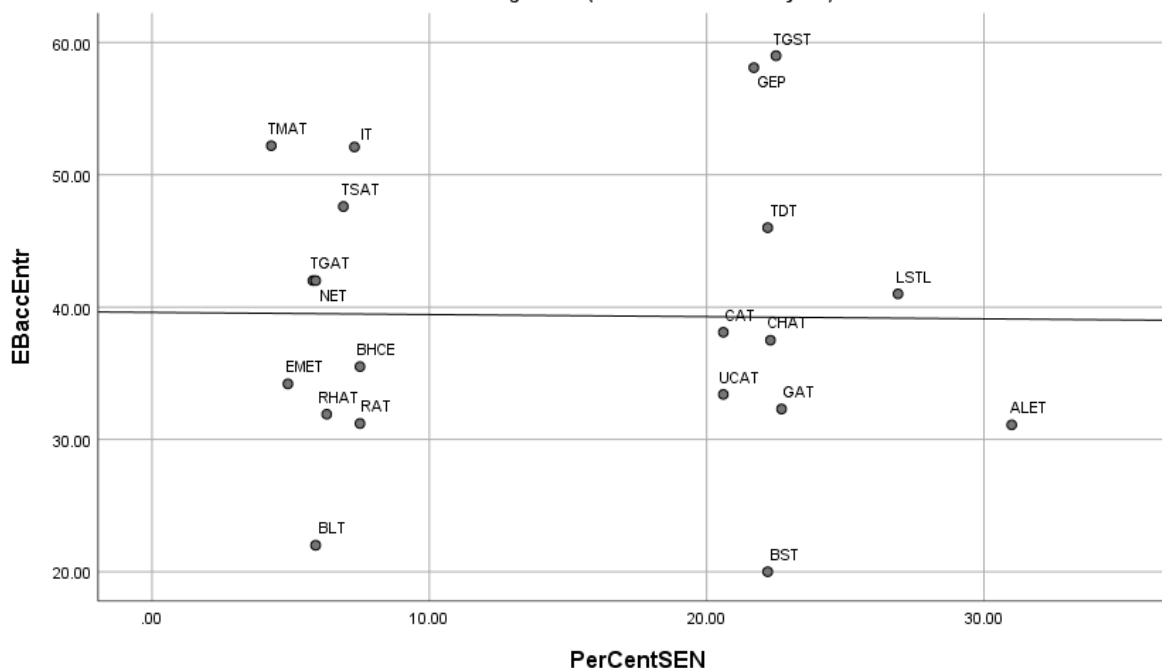
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Secondary Education – The Relationship Between the Percentage of SEN Students and the Percentage of Students Entering the English Baccalaureate

The first test of this sub-section examined the relationship between multi-academy trusts with the highest and lowest percentages of SEN students and the proportion of pupils entering the EBacc.

The results demonstrate that there was no correlation between the two variables, meaning that as one variable moved in one direction, the other moved in an alternative direction. In short, there was no relationship between the total number of SEN students in a multi-academy trust and the total number of pupils entering the EBacc.

The Relationship Between Percentage of SEN Students (MATs with Highest [top 10] and Lowest [bottom 10] and the Percentage of Students Entering EBacc (Full List of EBacc Subjects)



Correlations

| | | EBaccEntr | PerCentSEN |
|------------|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| EBaccEntr | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.014 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .955 |
| | N | 20 | 20 |
| PerCentSEN | Pearson Correlation | -.014 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .955 | |
| | N | 20 | 20 |

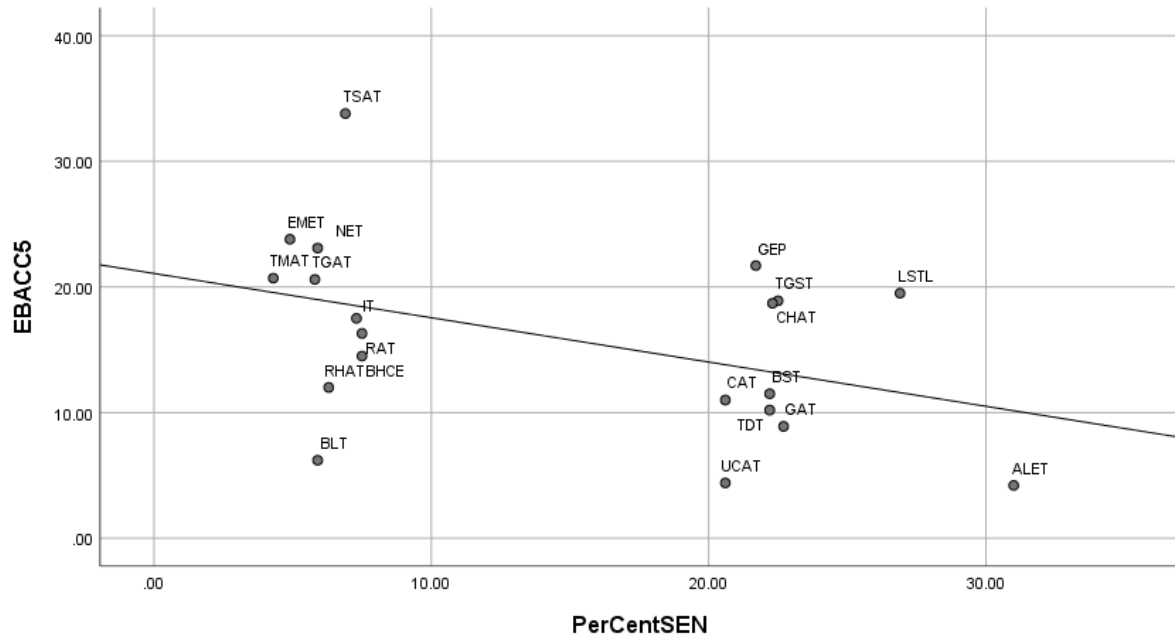
Secondary Education – The Relationship Between the Percentage of SEN Students and the Percentage of Students Achieving 5 EBacc Subject Grades at 5 or Above

The second test of this sub-section examined the relationship between multi-academy trusts with the highest and lowest percentages of SEN students and the proportion of pupils attaining 5 EBacc subject grades at 5 or above.

The results suggest that there was a weak negative correlation between the two variables, meaning that the relationship was only minor. The minor relationship recorded was negative, meaning that as the percentage of disadvantage students increased, the percentage of students

attaining 5 EBacc subjects at grade 5 or above decreased. Nevertheless, the significance of this relationship is minor.

The Relationship Between the Percentage of SEN Students (MAT's with Highest [top 10] and Lowest [bottom 10] Included) and the Percentage of Students Acheiving 5 EBacc Subject Grades at 5/C or Above



Correlations

| | | EBACC5 | PerCentSEN |
|------------|---------------------|--------|------------|
| EBACC5 | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.429 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .059 |
| | N | 20 | 20 |
| PerCentSEN | Pearson Correlation | -.429 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .059 | |
| | N | 20 | 20 |

Discussion and Conclusion

The prominence of individual and multi-academy trusts in the English education system has been increasing across the last two decades. The original reforms undertaken by the New Labour administrations were soon expanded upon by the coalition and then Conservative administrations. The success of academisation has been mixed according to a large scholarship that has endeavoured to measure the outcomes for students and wider society. Nevertheless, seldom have scholars focused on the outcomes of hard-to-reach populations within the academies system. The few scholars that have investigated the outcomes of these students have concluded with a mixed set of results.

This research paper adds to the pre-existing scholarship through the measurement of outcomes for two hard-to-reach student populations. The two hard-to-reach student populations focused on were disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs. The research has endeavoured to investigate the opportunities and outcomes available to these populations at key stage 2 and 4 through the use of secondary governmental data.

The results for primary education demonstrated a moderate correlation between disadvantaged and SEN students and the attainment of the expected combined standard. In short, as the percentage of disadvantaged and SEN students in each academy trust increased, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard decreased. Yet, this trend was not universal across all academy trusts. The mixed nature of these results reflects the findings of Hutchings and Francis (2017) who illustrated a diverse set of results between similar academy trusts.

The results for secondary education demonstrated a mixed set of outcomes for the two hard-to-reach populations. For disadvantaged students, a weak correlation was found between the percentages of this population in each academy trust and the proportion of students entering into the EBacc. Nevertheless, there was a strong correlation found between the percentages of disadvantage students in each academy trust and the proportion of students attaining 5 EBacc subject grades at 5/c or above. This offers support for the second hypothesis which stated that academies with higher populations of disadvantaged students would see lower proportions of pupils attaining 5 EBacc subject grades at 5/c and above. Yet, there is only minor support for this hypothesis when considerations are given to disadvantaged students in the EBacc entrance measure and SEN students for both measures.

Overall, this research demonstrates the importance of the government building on previous work to improve outcomes for disadvantaged students in the academies system.

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Appendix

Appendix 1.0: Percentage of disadvantage students (multi-academy trusts – key stage 2) and the total number of pupils meeting the expected combined standard in reading, writing and maths (2018/2019 academic year).

| MATs | MeetExpOut | DISADPup |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| LST | 57.00 | 73.90 |
| WOT | 73.00 | 72.60 |
| PT | 71.00 | 70.10 |
| CAT | 48.00 | 67.50 |
| TDT | 53.00 | 66.70 |
| DRB | 60.00 | 66.20 |
| TVE | 60.00 | 65.80 |
| BFET | 48.00 | 65.00 |
| WA | 46.00 | 64.10 |
| TT | 58.00 | 63.00 |
| BEP | 79.00 | 6.70 |
| TFBT | 77.00 | 7.00 |
| TRLT | 72.00 | 7.90 |
| CHAT | 76.00 | 8.20 |
| CUAT | 52.00 | 8.30 |
| FCAT | 72.00 | 8.80 |
| GSAT | 77.00 | 8.80 |
| XCET | 84.00 | 8.90 |
| EAT | 75.00 | 9.00 |
| LSP | 71.00 | 9.90 |

Appendix 1.1: Percentage of SEN students (multi-academy trusts – key stage 2) and the total number of pupils meeting the expected combined standard in reading, writing and maths (2018/2019 academic year).

| MATs | MeetExpOut | PerCentSEN |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| TVA | 58.00 | 3.30 |
| LSP | 71.00 | 6.00 |
| PCA | 80.00 | 6.00 |
| AST | 78.00 | 6.10 |
| WMAT | 80.00 | 6.10 |
| RHAT | 70.00 | 6.30 |
| PT | 71.00 | 6.40 |
| CKCC | 72.00 | 6.50 |
| STJP | 75.00 | 6.60 |
| OGAT | 81.00 | 6.70 |
| TAT | 47.00 | 37.20 |
| NCCA | 72.00 | 36.50 |
| BFAT | 68.00 | 34.20 |
| THT | 59.00 | 31.30 |
| DAT | 56.00 | 29.90 |
| FCAT | 80.00 | 29.90 |
| CET | 62.00 | 29.20 |
| RMAT | 61.00 | 28.60 |
| DLPT | 62.00 | 28.30 |
| VL | 60.00 | 27.50 |

Appendix 1.2: Percentage of disadvantage students (multi-academy trusts – key stage 4) and the total number of pupils being entered into the English Baccalaureate.

| MATs | DISADPup | EBaccEntr |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------|
| CLAT | 78.80 | 68.80 |
| NST | 10.20 | 57.20 |
| WRAT | 27.60 | 55.00 |
| TCAT | 31.10 | 54.40 |
| E-A | 18.10 | 51.90 |
| FCAT | 13.60 | 50.20 |
| AS | 56.60 | 49.90 |
| GA | 10.40 | 48.80 |
| ELT | 54.60 | 48.00 |
| OCL | 42.50 | 47.50 |
| AL | 54.30 | 13.20 |
| GEP | 58.10 | 13.90 |
| RET | 58.20 | 15.40 |
| MNSP | 66.30 | 16.10 |
| CSET | 67.40 | 16.30 |
| DWAT | 70.40 | 16.90 |
| THPT | 51.90 | 16.90 |
| EMET | 34.20 | 17.20 |
| TSAT | 50.80 | 17.50 |
| TAT | 43.20 | 15.60 |

Appendix 1.3: Percentage of SEN students (multi-academy trusts – key stage 4) and the total number of pupils being entered into the English Baccalaureate.

| MATs | EBaccEntr | PerCentSEN |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| ALET | 31.10 | 31.00 |
| LSTL | 41.00 | 26.90 |
| GAT | 32.30 | 22.70 |
| TGST | 59.00 | 22.50 |
| CHAT | 37.50 | 22.30 |
| BST | 20.00 | 22.20 |
| TDT | 46.00 | 22.20 |
| GEP | 58.10 | 21.70 |
| CAT | 38.10 | 20.60 |
| UCAT | 33.40 | 20.60 |
| TMAT | 52.20 | 4.30 |
| EMET | 34.20 | 4.90 |
| TGAT | 42.00 | 5.80 |
| BLT | 22.00 | 5.90 |
| NET | 42.00 | 5.90 |
| RHAT | 31.90 | 6.30 |
| TSAT | 47.60 | 6.90 |
| IT | 52.10 | 7.30 |
| BHCE | 35.50 | 7.50 |
| RAT | 31.20 | 7.50 |

Appendix 1.4: Percentage of disadvantaged students (multi-academy trusts – key stage 4) and the total number of pupils achieving 5 EBacc subjects at grade 5 or above.

| MATs | EBACC5 | DISADPup |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
| CLAT | 15.80 | 68.80 |
| NST | 1.90 | 57.20 |
| WRAT | 7.50 | 55.00 |
| CAT | 7.30 | 54.40 |
| E-A | 5.60 | 51.90 |
| FCAT | 4.20 | 50.20 |
| AS | 19.10 | 49.90 |
| GA | 2.00 | 48.80 |
| ELT | 2.80 | 48.00 |
| OCL | 9.70 | 47.50 |
| AL | 30.80 | 13.20 |
| GEP | 21.70 | 13.90 |
| RET | 35.00 | 15.40 |
| TAT | 29.50 | 15.60 |
| MNSP | 34.60 | 16.10 |
| CSET | 28.30 | 16.30 |
| DWAT | 42.10 | 16.90 |
| HPT | 32.80 | 16.90 |
| EMET | 23.80 | 17.20 |
| TSAT | 23.70 | 17.50 |

Appendix 1.5: Percentage of SEN students (multi-academy trusts – key stage 4) and the total number of pupils achieving 5 EBacc subjects at grade 5 or above.

| MATs | EBACC5 | PerCentSEN |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------|
| ALET | 4.20 | 31.00 |
| LSTL | 19.50 | 26.90 |
| GAT | 8.90 | 22.70 |
| TGST | 18.90 | 22.50 |
| CHAT | 18.70 | 22.30 |
| BST | 11.50 | 22.20 |
| TDT | 10.20 | 22.20 |
| GEP | 21.70 | 21.70 |
| CAT | 11.00 | 20.60 |
| UCAT | 4.40 | 20.60 |
| TMAT | 20.70 | 4.30 |
| EMET | 23.80 | 4.90 |
| TGAT | 20.60 | 5.80 |
| BLT | 6.20 | 5.90 |
| NET | 23.10 | 5.90 |
| RHAT | 12.00 | 6.30 |
| TSAT | 33.80 | 6.90 |
| IT | 17.50 | 7.30 |
| BHCE | 14.50 | 7.50 |
| RAT | 16.30 | 7.50 |