

What % of pupils achieve grade 5 or above in English & maths GCSEs?

Less than 4 in 10 pupils in 2030 will  
achieve grade 5 or above in English  
& maths GCSEs (45.3% in 2022/23)

# Generation at risk

# England 'facing grades' after

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## A new educational dawn should focus on pupils' wellbeing

Lee Elliot Major



# A generation at risk

## Rebalancing education in the post-pandemic era

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**Could learning loss suffered by school pupils in England & UK end up being the most enduring and inequitable legacy of the Covid pandemic?**

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International review of learning loss & pandemic strategies

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Dynamic model of skill formation with socio-emotional & cognitive skills linked to GCSE outcomes & social mobility

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Low cost equalising policies

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# *Post-pandemic gaps in England*

Study/measure	Socio-economic measure	Size of gap
GCSE attainment at age 15/16, 2022/23 (DfE)	Free school meals entitlement versus non-FSM	3.94 (widest gap in a decade)
Age 5 expected levels in the early learning goals, 2022/23 (DfE)	Free school meals entitlement versus non-FSM	20.2% (49.7% versus 69.9%)
OECD maths score at age 15 (2022)	Index of economic, social and cultural status	86 points between top and bottom 25% of status (similar to gap in 2015/18)
NFER reading tests for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils (2023)	Free school meals entitlement versus non-FSM	7 months' progress
EPI reading tests in primary school (2023)	Primary schools with high and low levels of disadvantage	12.3 months of learning (11.7 months before lockdown)

Category	England	Other Countries
<b>Tutoring</b>	£1 billion National Tutoring Programme	Australia: \$337 million programme. Germany: €1 billion for tutoring. Spain, Chile, USA: significant tutoring initiatives.
<b>Boosting Teaching Capacity</b>	No strategy to increase teaching capacity or hire more teachers.	Scotland, Wales: Focus on hiring new teachers. France, Italy, New Zealand, Netherlands: similar strategies.
<b>Extracurricular Activities</b>	Limited, with a 2021 summer school and Holiday Activities and Food Programme.	France, Germany, Scotland, Wales, Netherlands, Ireland, Japan: Extensive extracurricular programs.
<b>Improving Wellbeing</b>	Some mental health/wellbeing guidance	Canada, France, Scotland, Netherlands, Wales: Various mental health initiatives.
<b>Addressing Absenteeism</b>	Attendance hubs, mentor programs, automated texts to parents.	Scotland, Chile, USA, New Zealand: Home visits, awareness and tracking teams, attendance officers.
<b>Equity Policies</b>	£1.3 billion 'recovery premium' for disadvantaged pupils.	Spain, France, USA, Scotland, Japan, Canada, Germany, New Zealand: Various equity initiatives.
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>Focused on academic catch-up, less on socio-emotional skills and extracurricular support.</b>	<b>Other countries had a more holistic approach including socio-emotional skills and extracurricular activities.</b>

## *Post-pandemic recovery approaches*

# *Model of skill formation – latent class analysis & production functions to predict outcomes*

- Cohort studies provide data from birth to adulthood.
- Our approach is to condense data into low dimensional vectors of ‘skills’ that interact in a dynamic fashion to produce later life outcomes. We argue that a low dimensional vector – comprising investment, cognition, and socioemotional skills – can account for the covariance between most of the data we observe.
- $m_{i,t}^k = \mu_{i,t}^k + \alpha_{i,t}^k \theta_t^k + \varepsilon_{i,t}^k$
- We relate these vectors to future achievement
- $Y_T = \mu_T + \delta_N \theta_T^N + \delta_C \theta_T^C + \varepsilon$
- And we ask how skills at certain ages feed into skill production later on.

- $$\begin{pmatrix} \theta_{t+1}^N \\ \theta_{t+1}^C \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \gamma_1^N & \gamma_2^N \\ \gamma_1^C & \gamma_2^C \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \theta_t^N \\ \theta_t^C \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} \gamma_3^N \\ \gamma_3^C \end{pmatrix} \theta_t^I + \begin{pmatrix} \alpha^N \\ \alpha^C \end{pmatrix} x_t + \varepsilon$$

***Socio-emotional skills engage in positive social interactions, cooperate with others, show empathy & maintain attention.***

***Cognitive skills perform in cognitive tests, quant knowledge, reading & writing skills & fluid reasoning.***

	Age 5	Age 11	Age 14
Cognitive	British Ability Scales:	Teacher assessed ability in science, math, English, IT, and art.	APU Vocabulary Test
	- Pattern construction		
	- Vocabulary		
	- Picture similarities		
British Ability Scales			
Socio-emotional	SDQ items	SDQ items	SDQ items
Investment	Visit music events	Educational aspirations	N/A
	Visit art event	Extra lessons	
	Visit zoo	Books in home	
	Visit cinema	Plays Instrument	
	Library visits	Frequency talking to child	
	Parent read to child?	Father interest in education	
	Child has computer	Mother interest in education	
	Frequency of watching TV	Time spent with child	
	Number parents attended PA		
	Academic reason for attending school		

# *Findings*

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socio-emotional skills are as important as cognitive skills in achieving good GCSEs and decent wages

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20% of highest performing pupils in cognitive tests who had average socio-emotional skills at age 14 fail to attain 5 good GCSEs including English and maths

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for girls at age 14, socio-emotional skills 50% more impactful than cognitive skills for GCSE outcomes

# Intergenerational earning elasticity up by 15%

Country	IGE
United Kingdom	0.5
Italy	0.5
United States	0.47
France	0.41
Japan	0.34
Germany	0.32
Australia	0.26
Canada	0.19
Finland	0.18
Norway	0.17
Denmark	0.15

# *Low cost equalising policies*

- National programme of trained **undergraduate tutors** providing academic and mentoring support to help boost foundational skills of pupils
- **Enrichment guarantee** in schools so that all children benefit from wider activities outside the classroom that nurture socio-emotional skills
- National programme to measure pupils' **wellbeing** to create greater focus on wellbeing that is strongly linked to children's evolving skills
- Dedicated research programme to develop evidence-informed approaches to **school parent and community partnerships**
- Rebalancing Ofsted inspections to explicitly consider disadvantage in schools and credit those excelling when **serving under-resourced communities**
- A new deal for teachers **clarifying working hours** and supporting a more balanced school calendar to improve the wellbeing of teachers and pupils

# Questions/comments