

# Teachers' perspectives on the development of Curriculum for Wales



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# Sample

- Semi-structured interviews: 10 Pioneer Leads (AoLE) and 25 teachers in 10 schools (primary and secondary, Welsh and English medium) serving the more economically disadvantaged communities.
- A survey was developed to be administered to all teaching staff within Pioneer Schools nationally: distinguishing levels of involvement in 'Pioneer' work & role in school (e.g. SMT & classroom teachers).
- Survey data were collected from 634 teachers across 81 Pioneer Schools.

*How well informed do you feel about the new curriculum?*

33% of Pioneer Leads said they were considerably informed. This figure drops to 39% for teachers in Pioneer schools who as yet had no specific role or involvement in curriculum development.

*Are you familiar with the 'What Matters' statements?*

No specific involvement - 48% No, 52% Yes

*Are you happy with the current content of the What Matters statement in your AOLE? (only if familiar with them)* Response categories: Yes, Somewhat, Unsure, No.

For all except Pioneer Leads, there were more 'somewhat' happy than simply happy. 17% who are involved but not Pioneer Leads were unsure or unhappy; 26% who are not involved at all are unsure or unhappy.

*What do teachers think about more specific aspects of changes (subject specific knowledge, adaptation to teaching, AoLE teaching, teacher choice)?*

There is a significant group of teachers (ranging from 41% - 24%) who are unsure or have negative perspectives on the benefits of the new curriculum to their pupils and experience of teaching.

# 'Mindset' change

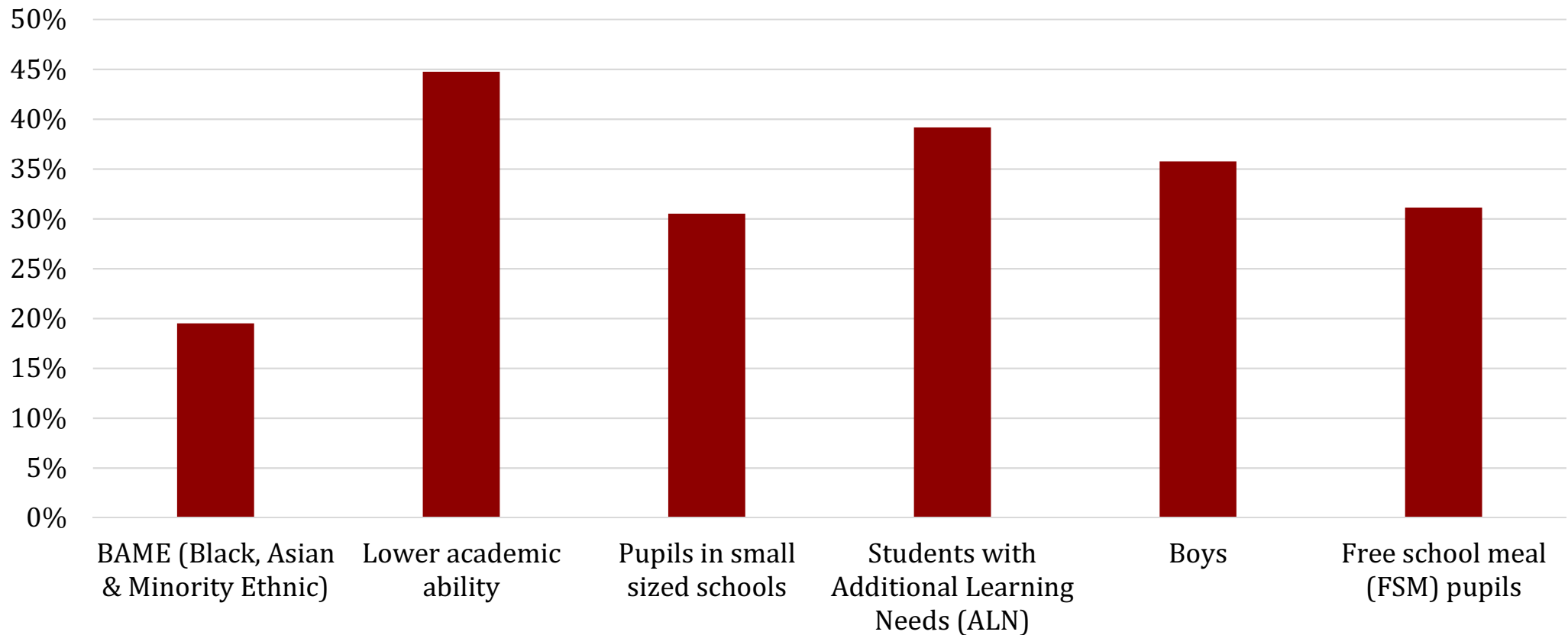
"It's a difficult one because it's change your mindset more than resources."

"I think a lot of heads will need to become far more creative and change their mindsets, look at the curriculum design issue. It's not going to be a box ticking exercise thank god, we've had that. This has got to be a lot more evolved and it's got to be a change of mindset."

"Have they got the skills to do those things because we've never taught in that particular way and you can't just suddenly change the mindset of a profession that's almost going to take a generation to re-educate that profession to do things differently."

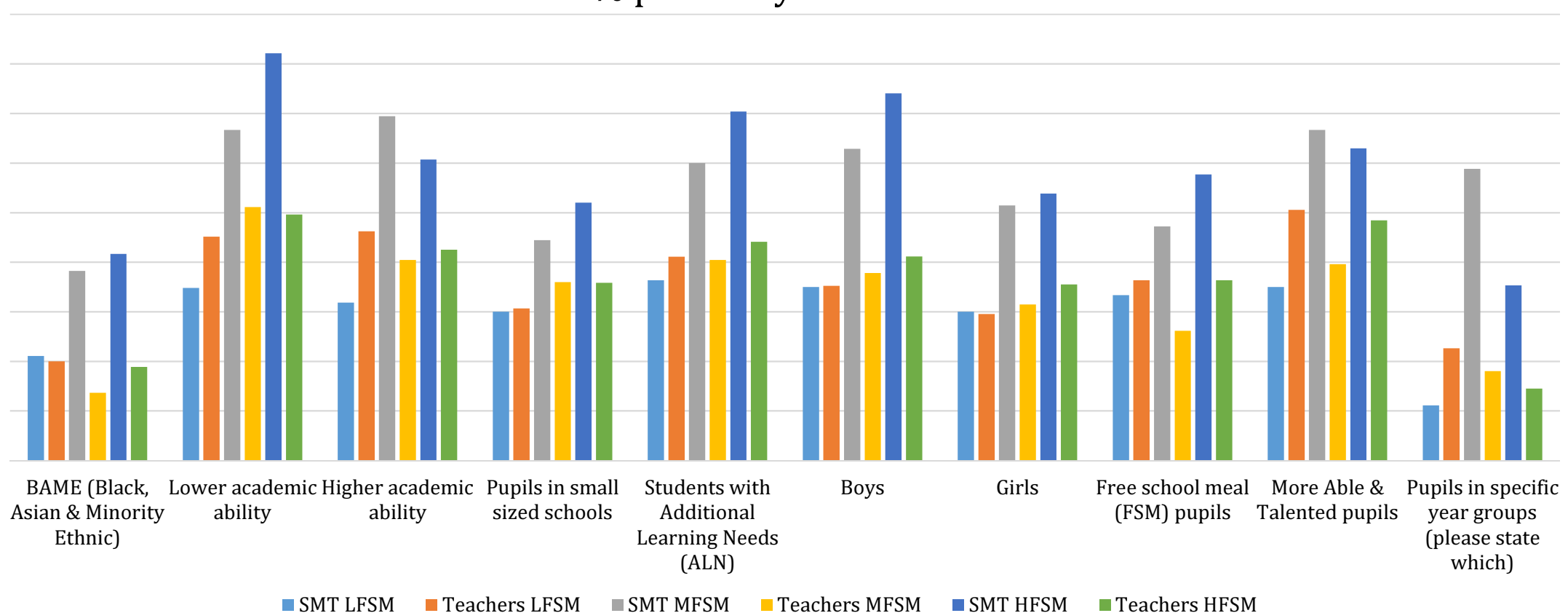
Dyfodol llwyddiannus i bawb: Ymchwiliadau i ddiwygio'r cwricwlwm  
Successful futures for all: Explorations of curriculum reform

Which, if any, of the following groups of pupils do you think could be affected (positively) by the introduction of the new curriculum? % of whole sample



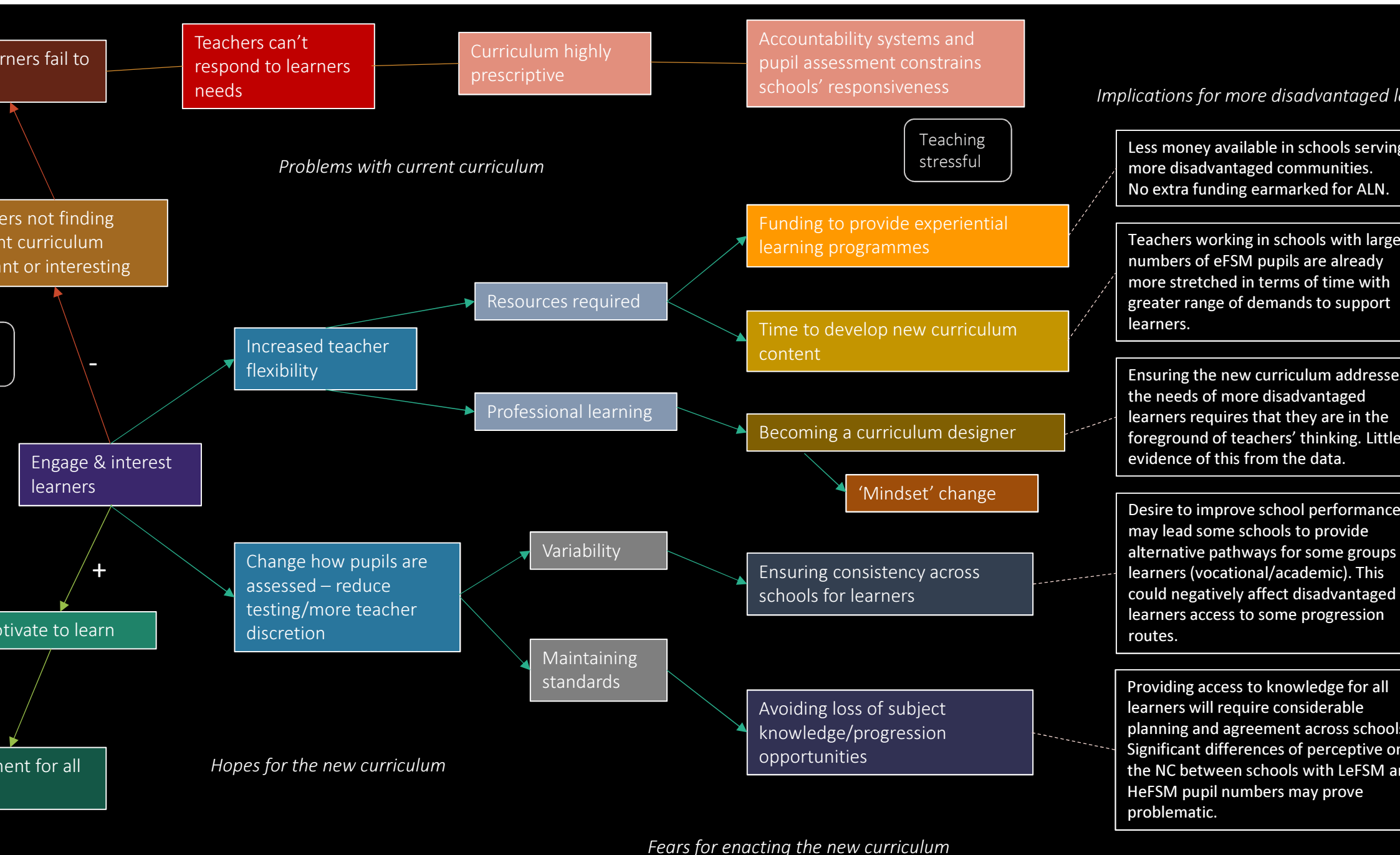
Dyfodol llwyddiannus i bawb: Ymchwiliadau i ddiwygio'r cwricwlwm  
Successful futures for all: Explorations of curriculum reform

Which, if any, of the following groups of pupils do you think could be affected by the introduction of the new curriculum?  
% positively indicated



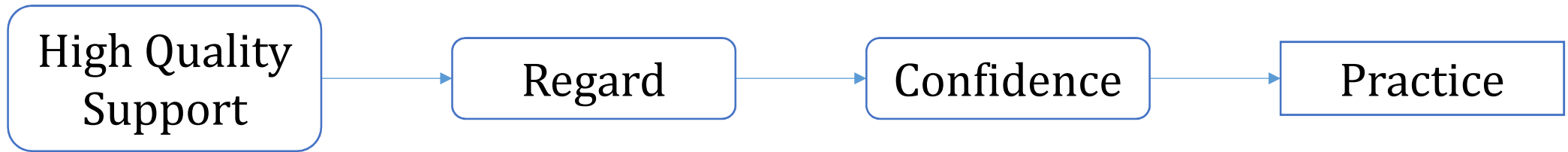
## Tensions within hopes & fears

- School & teacher flexibility
- Changes to assessment in keeping with the reforms
- Benefits of a broader curriculum that is more child-centred
- Avoiding variability across schools
- Successful progression to post 16 study and employment
- Ensuring pupils don't miss out on subject specific knowledge





# Implementation of reform for Success



ma, Claire (2011) *Monitoring and Evaluating Curriculum Implementation: Final Evaluation Report on the Implementation of The New Zealand Curriculum 2008-2009*.  
Ministry of Education, New Zealand

# How might learners from more disadvantaged backgrounds be affected by the new curriculum?

School practices contributing to the attainment gap between learners from more and less advantaged backgrounds:

- Lower quality teaching (less qualified teachers), ability grouping, undermined confidence, less access to a broad curriculum and fewer out-of-school educational experiences<sub>1</sub>.

What doesn't help:

- Adopting new curricula does not, in general, produce large improvements in learning outcomes; use of ICT (e.g. individualised, self-instructional programmes) has minimal impact on attainment for children living in poverty<sub>3</sub>

Factors that contribute to narrowing the gap:

- Rigorous monitoring and use of data; raising pupil aspirations using engagement/aspiration programmes; engaging parents; developing social and emotional competencies; supporting school transitions; providing strong and visionary leadership; high quality teaching; an inclusive curriculum<sub>2</sub>.
- Good pedagogy supported by high quality professional development; whole-school reform models, which address multiple elements of school provision; use of coaching teachers/assistants in evidence-based approaches include cooperative learning (structured groupwork), frequent assessment and 'learning to learn' strategies<sub>3</sub>.

Crenna-Jennings, Whitney (2018). *Key drivers of the disadvantage gap: Education in England Annual Report 2018*. Education Policy Institute: London.

Pirrie, A., & Hockings, E. (2012). Poverty, educational attainment and achievement in Scotland: a critical review of the literature

emie, F., & Mclean, C. (2015). Tackling disadvantage: what works in narrowing the achievement gap in schools. *Review of Education*, 3(2), 138-174.

harples, J., Slavin, R., Chambers, B., & Sharp, C. (2011). Effective classroom strategies for closing the gap in educational achievement for children and young people living in poverty, including white working-class boys. London: C4EO.

## Aims

• Our purposes  
• Raising attainment  
• Employability (Wales PLC)

## Content

- AoLEs
- 'What matters'
- Progression Steps
- An evolving and inconsistent process
- Expectations about high levels of teacher autonomy

## Pedagogy

- 12 pedagogical principles
- Considerable variation and experimentation
- Will be influenced by decisions about assessment

## Assessment

- The unknown
- High levels of... that current assessment system will be changed