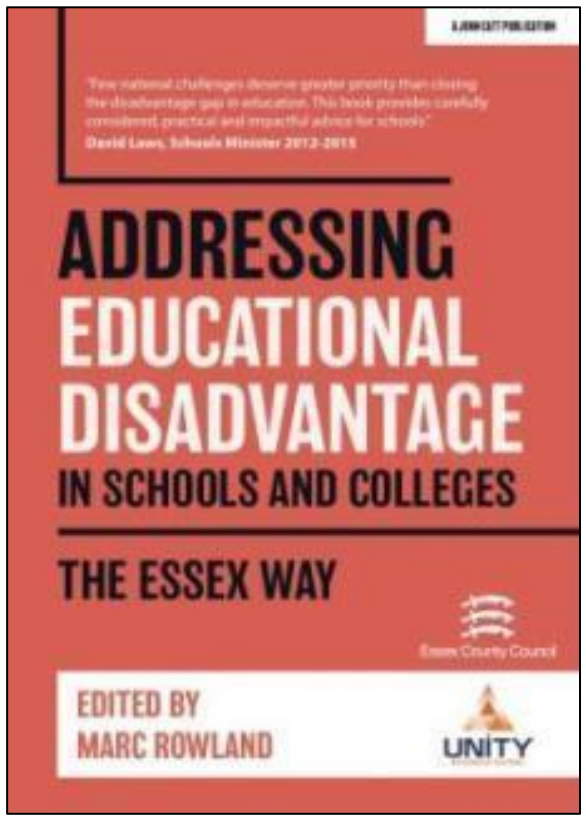
A Norfolk conversation on tackling disadvantage
Helping all pupils to thrive in our schools

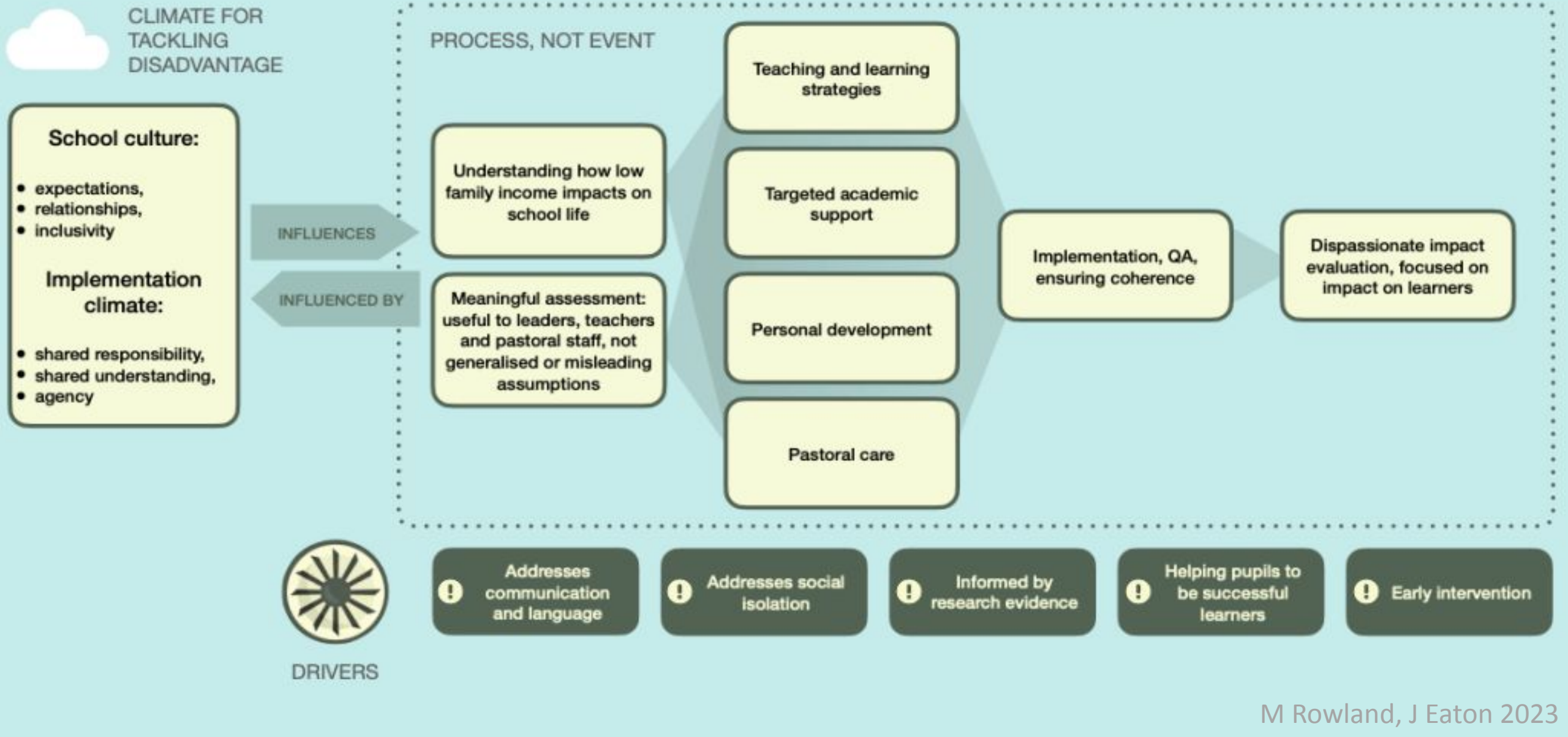
Marc Rowland

Unity Research School
June 2023



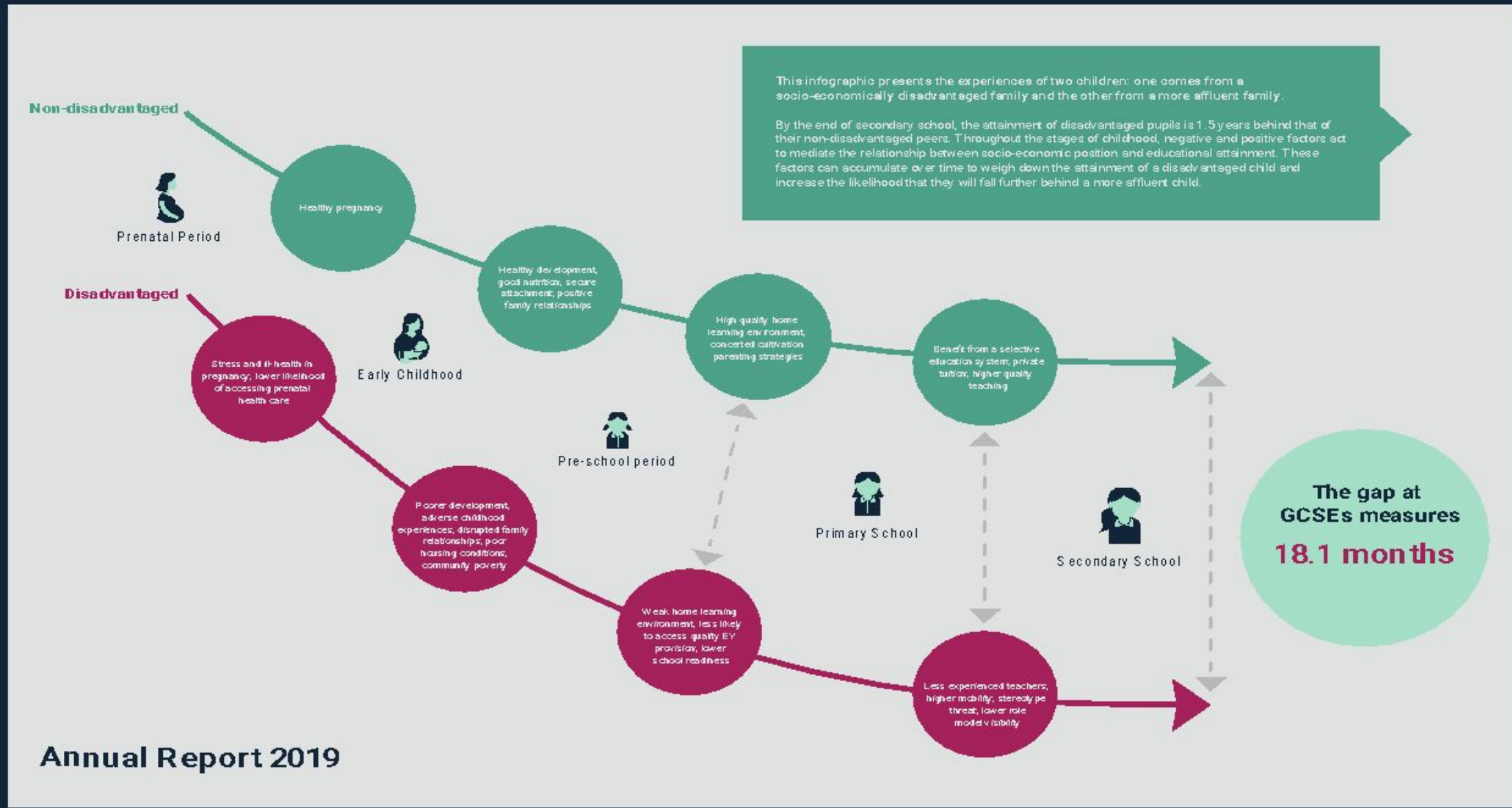

"Few national challenges deserve greater priority than closing the disadvantage gap in education. This book provides carefully considered, practical and impactful advice for schools"
David Laws, Schools Minister 2012-2015
ADDRESSING
EDUCATIONAL
DISADVANTAGE
IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
THE ESSEX WAY
Essex County Council
EDITED BY
MARC ROWLAND
UNITY


USA
USA
2



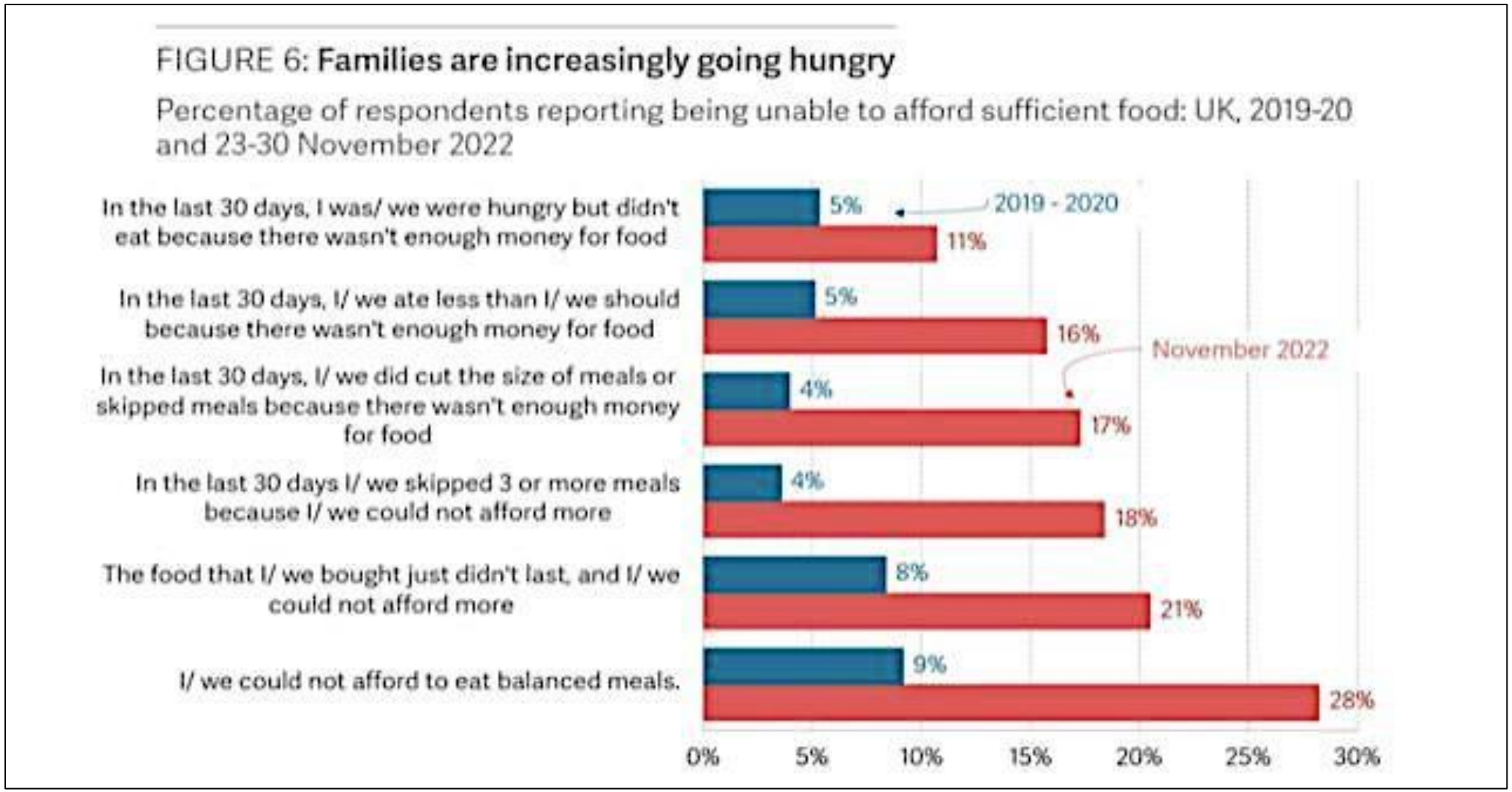
M Rowland, J Eaton 2023

Determinants of the education disadvantage gap



Annual Report 2019

Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Families are increasingly hungry…



Educational disadvantage - traps to avoid:

- Less affluent pupils and / or families don't value education / have low aspirations.
- Less affluent families aren't interested in how their child is performing academically and / or socially.
- Low numbers of disadvantaged pupils = low priority.
- Schools / teachers can't mitigate the impact of inequality on learning.
- Schools can solve all of the social challenges children face.
- Intervening to the label 'Pupil Premium'.
- Assuming disadvantage is static (assessment v assumptions).
- Over-intervention (and too much 'outervention').
- Pupils missing teacher input / explanation / modelling.
- The presumption of language comprehension.
- Disadvantaged pupils aren't interested / motivated by learning.
- Curriculum inequity (formal and informal).
- 'It's 'just' Quality First Teaching'. Pastoral, careers, enrichment matter.
- Not tightly linking activities to assessment of need.
- Disadvantage = low attainment (or ability!).
- Progress is more important than attainment (necessary progress!).
- Observing teacher actions rather than pupil responses.
- Addressing disadvantage is the responsibility of the PP lead.
- Activity = impact
- Trying to prove things have worked rather than dispassionate, reflective, steady improvements (with bumps!) over time.



DOMIN_DOMINGETTY IMAGES

Teachers and support staff can change the lives of all children, but particularly those from less affluent backgrounds. Especially those that find learning more difficult. **Success leads to motivation.**

- Communication and language
- Social interaction
- Reading
- Relationships and expectations
- Improving pupils as learners.

are key…

Expectations and labels

'If you expect nothing from somebody you are never disappointed.'

Sylvia Plath



What's the *first* thing… discuss!

- Free school meals
- Pupil Premium
- Special educational needs
- Children looked after
- Mobility
- EHCP
- White British boys

https://www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive-bias.html

'Anchoring' or heuristics (mental short cuts)

Helping disadvantaged pupils feel like they belong in the classroom



Imagine being in a new city abroad. You don't speak the language. You don't know your way around.

Conversely, everyone else around you seems to be contently going about their daily business.



How can we foster a sense of belonging for our disadvantaged pupils?

- **Level the playing field - Empower all pupils with key knowledge at the very beginning of lessons**
- **Have clear routines and structures - All pupils feel safe and secure when the are confident they know what's coming.**

https://researchschool.org.uk/durrington/news/levelling-the-playing-field

Talk partners…
- Who is talking / listening?
- who doesn't have one?

Vocabulary at aged five

- There is a 27% gap between the lowest income quintile and the highest.
- The lowest quintile have 16% more likely to have conduct problems compared to the highest quintile.
- The lowest quintile are 15% more likely to have hyperactivity problems compared to the highest quintile.

Waldfogel and Washbrook, 2010

‘Scheduled’

Dictionary definition:

‘included in, or planned according to the schedule’.

‘Grotesque’

‘Similar to gross’



Bringing words to life through real life, pupil friendly examples:



‘Norwich are scheduled to play (beat!) Ipswich on Saturday at 3.00pm’.

‘My birthday party is scheduled for 2.00pm this Sunday’



https://my.chartered.college/impact_article/deepening-knowledge-through-vocabulary-learning/

Multiple, meaningful interactions with new language.





Avoid the four Ps! Presume at peril!

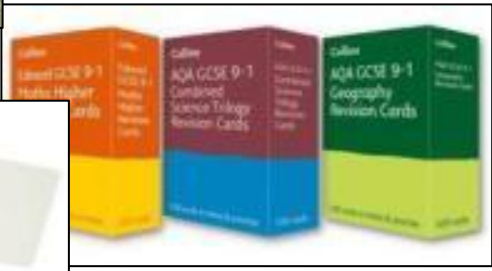


- **Presumption of language and oracy:** Can pupils access the language being used? Are they getting opportunities to talk? Are they being heard?





- **Presumption of background knowledge:** Do pupils have the knowledge to participate in their lessons?





- **Presumption of good learning behaviours:** Do we explicitly ensure that pupils are actively participating in their learning in a group setting, or independently? Do pupils understand the process of learning?



- **Presumption of positive learning experiences:** Do we explicitly know that pupils are experiencing success, and have positive interactions with adults and peers?

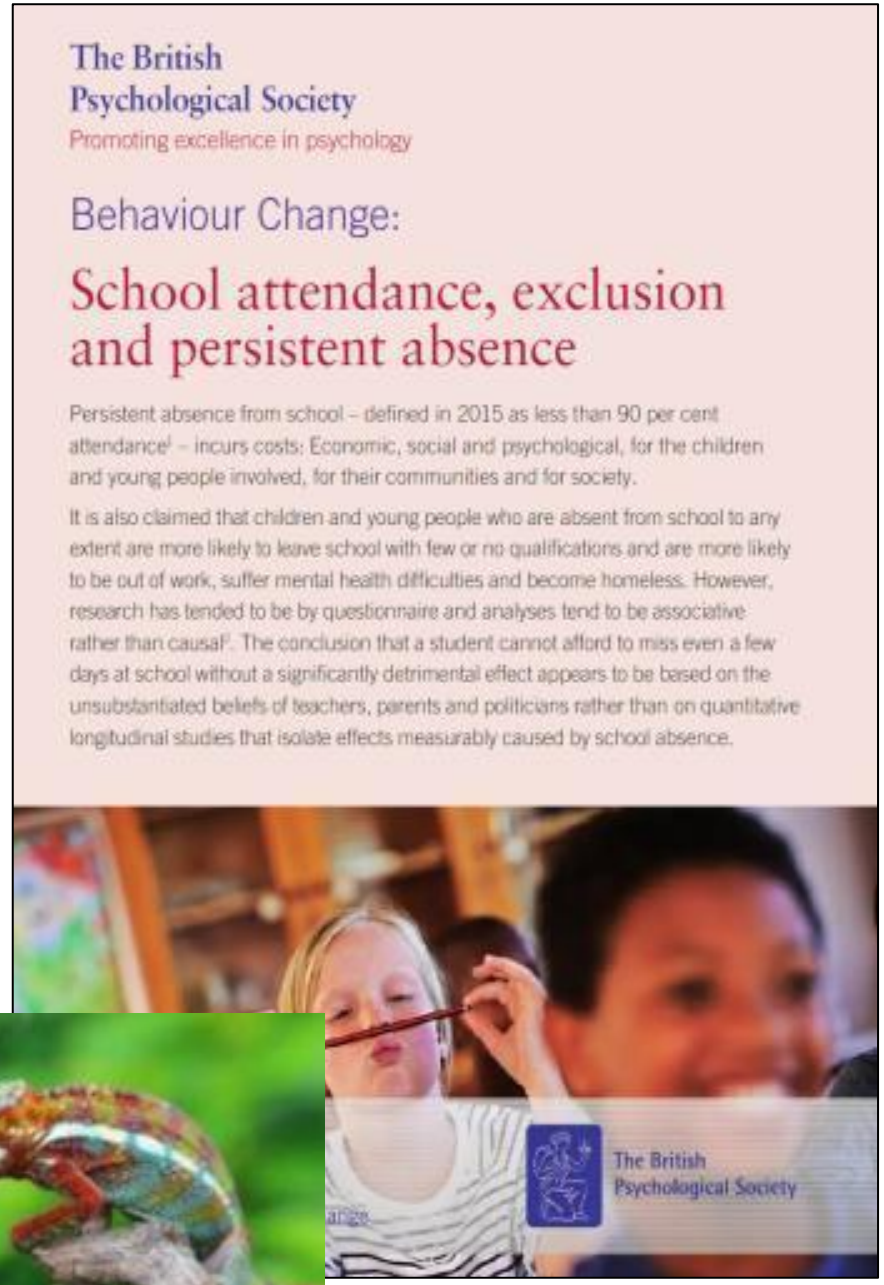
Attendance

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Systemic / Attitudinal
- School behaviour

- Literacy
- Social isolation

- Social norms
- Shared agency
- Extrinsic – take care!

- Home visits for PA







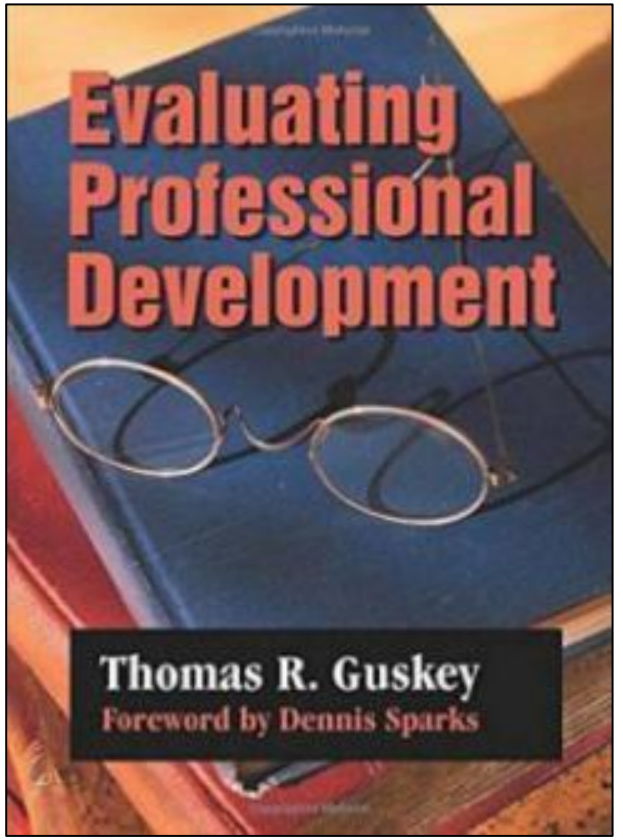
Over-optimism haunts the graveyard of failed initiatives!



Dispassionate impact evaluation

Evaluation is fundamental to continuous improvement and to building a solid evidence base that will enable the plan to impact on pupils.

- Understand, not prove
- Decouple evaluation from accountability
- Objectivity is vital
- Activity does not equate to impact
- Improve pupils as learners



Ultimately what matters - the practitioner is the intervention.



Pupils with strong language, good background knowledge, self-efficacy & good self-regulation skills can thrive, even if elements of teaching such as explanations, modelling or relationships are not always perfect.

Pupils with more limited language, background knowledge & self-regulation skills need the highest quality explanations, formative assessment & strong relationships. High quality, inclusive teaching matter for all pupils, but particularly for those that find learning more difficult.



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https://researchschool.org.uk/unity/