

READING ENGLAND'S FUTURE

Mapping how well the poorest children read



READ ON
GET ON

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Close to one in four children in England still cannot read well by the age of 11 – in spite of significant progress in recent years. This figure rises to two in five among children from low-income families.

It is unacceptable that so many children are not reading well by the age of 11. These children are not just less likely to experience the joy of reading. They are more likely to struggle as they make the transition to secondary school and then, later, into adulthood.

That is why a wide range of organisations have come together to lead the *Read On. Get On.* campaign. Together, we will take action to work towards a historic goal for the UK: all children should be reading well by the age of 11 by 2025.

This report provides new evidence to support the *Read On. Get On.* campaign by charting the geography of reading disadvantage in England. It compares the reading ability of poor children across parliamentary constituencies. If we are to achieve the historic goal of all children reading well by the age of 11 by 2025, we cannot forget a single poor child in any part of the country.

A focus on young and poor children

The foundations laid before children turn 11 are critical. For example, it is recognised that London's secondary schools have improved dramatically over the last decade. But less remarked upon is the fact that London's 11-year-olds also read well.

The *Read On. Get On.* campaign is focused on children under the age of 11. It argues that children living in poverty need to be a particular focus. This report therefore focuses on reading ability among children eligible for free school meals. These children make up nearly a fifth of all children and are less likely to read well than their more affluent peers. Unless more children from low-income families are reading well in

all parts of the country, a national mission to ensure all children are reading well at 11 by 2025 will fail.

Despite progress, all parts of the country risk allowing poor children to fall behind

The first important point to make is that there is no part of the country, not one local area, even in London, that has currently achieved the *Read On. Get On.* goal for poor children. This gives a sense of the scale of the ambition.

But some areas have much further to go than others. How well poor children are reading varies massively across the country. In the best performing areas, close to nine out of ten poor children read well. In the worst performing areas, four out of ten are falling behind.

This means that there is no part of the country that does not need to do more to reach the goal of all children reading well by 11.

These worst performing areas – where being born poor has the most effect on your chances of reading well – can be found in all regions of the country. They are in cities, towns and rural areas, and in Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat areas.

Rural areas, market towns and coastal towns face particular challenges

While poor children being left behind is an issue in all parts of the country, the risks are greater in some types of areas than in others.

First, the risk of poor children falling behind in reading are higher in 'town and country' and 'countryside' areas.

- Almost 40% of 'town and country' parliamentary constituencies are in the bottom 25% of areas nationally.
- Close to a third of 'countryside' constituencies are in the bottom 25% of areas nationally for poor children's reading ability at age 11.

In contrast, no London parliamentary constituency is in the bottom 25%, and just 20% of parliamentary constituencies in other major urban areas are in the bottom 25%.

Second, there are bigger challenges in some regions. Poor children in London are reading well, but in the South East, East of England, and Yorkshire and the Humber, they do particularly badly.

- In the South East and in the East of England, over 45% of parliamentary constituencies are in the bottom 25% for poor children reading well at 11.
- In Yorkshire and the Humber, this figure is just under 45%.

Different routes to falling behind at 11

There are two main routes to poor reading at 11: first, poor language development before a child turns five; and second, poor progress in reading between five and 11.

- Some areas suffer both: regions with this overall pattern are in the East of England and South East; Rochford and Southend East is an example of a parliamentary constituency with this pattern.
- Some areas make decent progress between five and 11 but from very low starting points: regions with this overall pattern are the North West and North East; Torridge and West Devon is an example of a parliamentary constituency where this happens.
- Other areas achieve poor progress between five and 11 for their disadvantaged pupils, despite reasonably good starting points: a region with this overall pattern is Yorkshire and the Humber; Northampton North is an example of a parliamentary constituency where this happens.

But we can be ambitious for all poor children

We know it can be done. First, for areas where poor children are falling behind in reading, there are similar areas demographically that achieve very different results. For example, comparing Daventry with Calder Valley, or Wolverhampton South East with Birmingham Edgbaston, shows similar levels of pupils on free school meals but very different outcomes in terms of children's reading at 11.

Second, we have seen many areas dramatically improve reading by low-income pupils over the past decade – for example, Sleaford and North Hykeham

and Leicester West in the East Midlands, and Witham in the East of England, and perhaps surprisingly, many of these areas are outside London. However, we have also seen 35 areas go backwards over the past decade in terms of the absolute performance of their disadvantaged pupils, which shows how important it is not to take our eye off the ball. Leeds North East, Wokingham, and South Leicestershire are at the top of the list of areas where children from low-income families are performing worse in reading now than ten years ago.

Local responses to local challenges

If we are going to achieve the *Read On. Get On.* ambition, it will require local communities, schools and parents to 'own' it. That is why the purpose of this report is to inform and inspire locally driven change.

We want this analysis to support every local area to understand its starting point and the nature of its challenge. Every school and teacher, every local area wants all children to be reading well – a big part of the *Read On. Get On.* campaign will be to inform and tap into this local energy and ambition.

Lasting change for children is enabled by decisions made by central government, but ultimately it is about schools, pre-school professionals, local government and communities themselves learning from the successes of other areas.

The *Read On. Get On.* campaign is therefore working towards:

- all early years settings and schools signing up to support and promote the achievement of the *Read On. Get On.* goal in their local community
- working with early years leads and headteachers to encourage them to become champions of the campaign, with some settings and schools becoming beacons of good practice for working with their local communities to celebrate and improve reading
- the creation of talking and reading towns and cities, which, critically, bring together schools and early years services, following the lead of places like Sheffield, which have embedded a focus on language and literacy in early years settings and schools to improve reading levels.

The *Read On. Get On.* campaign will be reporting in early 2015 on what national policy change we believe needs to happen in the next Parliament to reach a

goal of all children reading well at 11 by 2025. As this report highlights, in policy terms, this will need to cover both early years and primary schools.

This report indicates where some of the challenges lie in getting all children reading and provides some pointers for future action. These could include facilitating area-to-area and school-to-school learning – so that areas and schools that are not doing well

need to learn from their peers; this is one of the best ways of ensuring lasting improvement. In regions outside London there may also be a case for schemes that are similar to the London Challenge, but that focus on children under 11 rather than secondary schools, and include primary schools, pre-school providers, Local Authorities and communities.



PHOTO: JO METSON/SCOTT/SAVE THE CHILDREN

I UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE

Being able to read well is the foundation on which so much else depends. Reading unlocks the door to a child's future.

But every year, close to one in four¹ children leave primary school without being able to read well. Among poorer children that figure rises to two in five² – almost double the rate of their better-off peers.

Leaving school without this foundational skill has repercussions for the rest of a child's life. A child who is behind in reading at age 11 is likely to face a difficult time at secondary school and, beyond that, in the world of work: one in four people earning less than £10,000 are not functionally literate, compared with fewer than one in 25 of those earning over £30,000.³

The *Read On. Get On.* campaign was launched in September 2014. Organisations and individuals have come together on an unprecedented scale to seek to achieve the historic goal of ensuring that all children are reading well by the age of 11 by 2025.

Reaching our goal will require action at a national level – by government, civil society and businesses – and across society, a celebration of the joy of reading, so that it becomes part of our national conversation. However, it will also require local communities, schools and parents to 'own' the ambition. We will never achieve a nation where all children are reading well without local action.

This report examines the current, highly varied pattern of achievement in reading across England. There is no area in the country that does not have to make significant further improvements in children's reading. However, as this report shows, some have further to travel than others.

In this chapter we present the context: we review what is already known about the differences in educational attainment for secondary school-aged children. However, little is known about the patterns for primary school-aged children. We go on to show how this report helps to address that gap.

‘READING WELL’ BY 11: A DEFINITION

The measure of ‘reading well’ that the *Read On. Get On.* campaign is using is equivalent to what the government will introduce as the new ‘expected level’ for 11-year-olds from 2016 onwards.⁴ The current equivalent of this new measure is what educationalists call a ‘level 4b’ – two steps up from the current expected level of level 4. This raises the bar to a level of reading that has been shown to give children a good chance of going on to get good GCSEs.⁵

While we welcome this raising of ambitions, this report uses the current expected level – level 4 – when assessing whether children are ‘reading well’. This is because an important part of the analysis has included tracking the trends in reading by parliamentary constituencies over time and this is only possible using level 4. The new, more advanced definition of reading has only been reported by the government since 2013.

BACKGROUND: WHAT DO WE ALREADY KNOW ABOUT GEOGRAPHICAL INEQUALITY IN EDUCATION?

In 2013, Ofsted reported that while levels of GCSE attainment nationally had improved overall, significant variations remained in how well children, particularly the poorest, are doing at school in different parts of the country. It highlighted large differences between English regions: while London is a particular success story (see below), in a relatively wealthy region such as the South East, for example, poor children had consistently fallen behind, achieving below the national average for children from low-income families in their GCSEs in every local authority in the region.⁶

The key conclusion from this Ofsted report was that poor attainment by low-income pupils was no longer simply an ‘urban challenge’. Rather, educational attainment among poor children was shown to be very low in some perhaps unexpected parts of the country. The map on the next page, taken from the Ofsted report, shows the location of the secondary schools in which poor children did worst in their GCSEs in 2012. Two points are noteworthy here. First, none of these schools are in London. Second (and closely linked to the core argument in this report), outside London these schools are scattered across all types of areas in the country. They are in urban areas – in and around Liverpool, for example – and in rural areas, including in the home counties.

The rate of improvement in London has certainly been impressive. In 2007, inner London was the

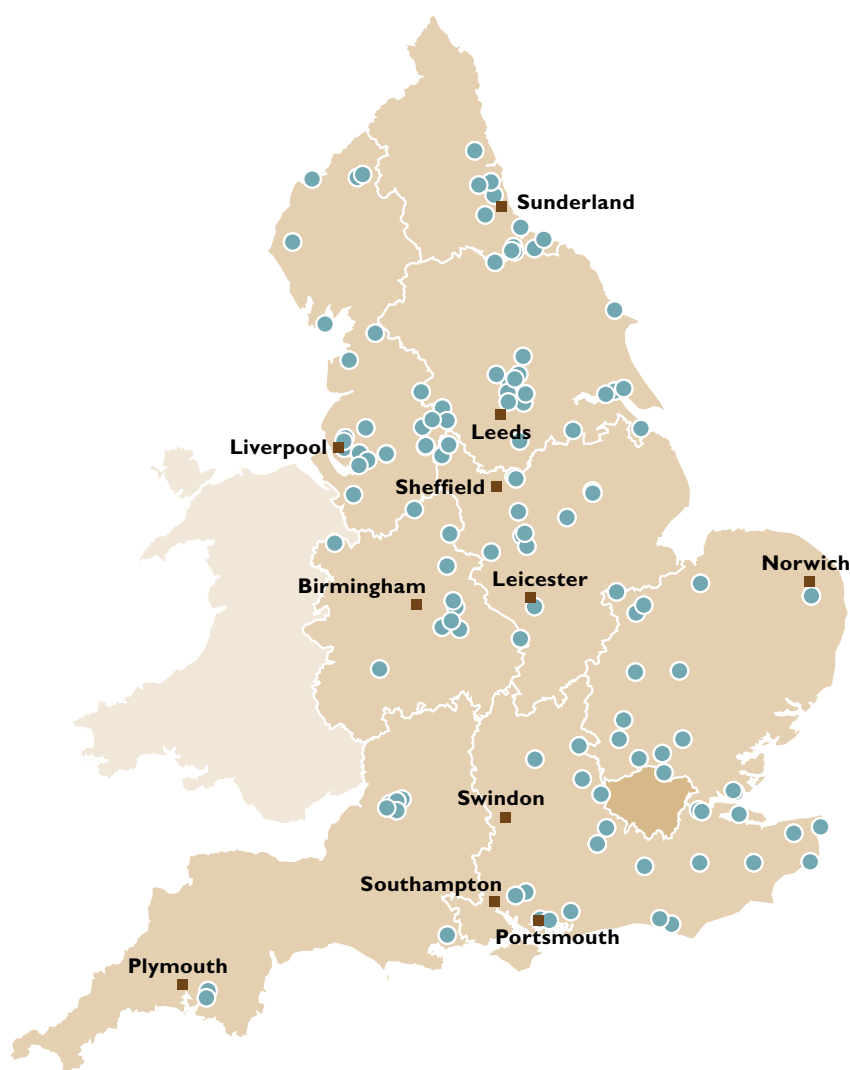
second worst region for educational outcomes at GCSEs in the whole of England – it is now the second best, beaten to the top spot by outer London.⁷ Why has London outstripped other parts of England?

One set of possible explanations concern the demographics of London – for example, its unique ethnic mix or its gentrification. However, in a recent study by education experts, CfBT, these explanations are rejected. It finds that London has not gentrified more than many other areas and all ethnic groups are doing better in the capital – including poor white British children.⁸

An additional set of possible explanations has tended to focus on what has happened within the secondary school systems itself. This includes teacher recruitment; improved school buildings; and reform programmes such as London Challenge, the conversion of schools into academies and Teach First. In its report, CfBT concludes that these are important ‘enabling factors’, which are likely to have had an impact. However, they particularly single out another factor: the importance of effective “leadership at every level of the system” – in schools, but also across communities.⁹ This is an important finding when thinking about how to spread the London experience to other parts of the country; we return to it in the final section of this paper.

One possible explanation for London’s success story has received surprisingly little attention: the potential contribution of improvements in the learning of younger children, particularly in literacy. An assessment of this, by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), presented some significant findings.

FIGURE I LOCATION OF 111 SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITH ABOVE-AVERAGE PROPORTION OF FSM PUPILS, WITH LOWEST PERFORMANCE AT GCSE FOR THESE PUPILS



Based on 111 schools with above-average proportions of FSM pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 (national average = 14%) and where fewer than 20% of FSM pupils attained the GCSE benchmark in 2012

Source: Ofsted, *Unseen Children: Access and achievement 20 years on – evidence report*, 2013

It stated that:

“We show that the higher level of achievement at (the end of secondary school) and the improvement in results for disadvantaged pupils in London and other big cities can be mostly explained by differences in prior attainment (at the end of primary school).”¹⁰

It concluded that their analysis suggests:

“... that the big improvement over the last decade in FSM results in London and other big cities is unlikely to have been driven by secondary schools, as was previously thought. Instead, the roots are likely to lie in primary schools.”¹¹

THE REMIT OF THIS REPORT

One of the assumptions underpinning the *Read On. Get On.* campaign is that it is critical to get things right early on: when children fall behind at a young age, particularly in critical skills such as reading, their chances of catching up are much diminished. The IFS study strongly supports this contention.

This report therefore seeks to understand the scale and nature of the challenge in the early years and in the primary school phase of education in different parts of the country. While the research reported

on here builds on previous work, it is different in a number of important ways:

- It covers children under the age of 11. We examine reading achievement at age 11 for children on free school meals as a core indicator and how reading achievement for poor children has changed over the course of ten years.
- The research does not only focus on schools, but also looks at children's early language development, measured at the age of five. It demonstrates the importance of what happens in the early years before children even start school. This supports the *Read On. Get On.* campaign's assertion that improving children's reading will only be achieved through a comprehensive approach (see box below).
- This research is different because we use parliamentary constituencies, rather than local authorities or individual schools. The rationale for this is twofold:
 - 1 In the run up to the election, we want MPs to understand what is happening in their areas with regards to children's early language and reading, in order to encourage them to take action with us. Our research shows how improving reading and language, particularly among poorer children, is a challenge in different parts of the country and for all the political parties. It is, then, an issue that all parties need to address in the coming election.

2 Parliamentary constituencies are a smaller area measurement than local authorities.

We wanted to analyse what is happening in different types of communities across the country, but in closer detail than has been done before.

- This report is linked to a plan for action that is not solely about central government; it is about early years settings and schools working to set and own ambitious local targets and goals. And it is about local communities and other local services – particularly pre-school services – all doing their bit.
- We intend for this report to provide an important baseline for each area. As we look forward to making progress towards the *Read On. Get On.* ambition, each local area should know where it is starting from and how far it has to travel.

If we are to achieve the historic goal of all children reading well, there is not one area in the country that does not need to improve, in particular for the poorest children. Even areas where children are now reading much better than a decade ago remain far short of ensuring all children are reading well. This report celebrates the progress made in many areas, and details the scale of the challenge localities still face.

ACTION IS NEEDED ON FOUR MAIN FRONTS

Responding to the scale of the challenge will require action across many settings and from many organisations and individuals. While schools are fundamental, they cannot achieve a national goal of all children reading well by 11 on their own. Government action will be critical to what we want to achieve, but it will not be able to achieve lasting change alone. Others in schools and civil society must also be fully behind the ambition. Action will be needed to support children's reading across four key areas:

- *In communities, celebrating the enjoyment of reading:* when children do not enjoy reading they have less chance of learning to read well.
- *Before starting school:* the early years of a child's life are critical in establishing good early language levels: what happens before they have set foot in a school can shape their lives forever.
- *In school:* while thousands of head teachers, teachers and schools already make a huge difference, they need the support, resources and autonomy to achieve even more.
- *In the home:* mothers and fathers, carers and extended families can be the most important teachers: they all want the best for their children; but some need more support and help.

Source: Save the Children, *Read On. Get On.: How reading can help children escape poverty*, 2014

2 READING BETWEEN THE LINES: PATTERNS IN POOR CHILDREN'S READING STANDARDS ACROSS ENGLAND

This chapter presents a comprehensive mapping across England of reading among children from low-income families at age 11. It demonstrates that poor children – meaning here those on free school meals – have very different levels of reading, depending on where they happen to be born and grow up.

We know that to achieve the goal of all children reading well by the age of 11 will need an ambitious approach in all areas of the country, even those that are doing relatively well. In places where poor children are falling behind more than average, we need to do even more.

A key message in this chapter is that the problem of poor children falling behind exists in all parts of the country – in different regions; in cities, towns and rural areas; and in Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat heartlands as well as in marginal seats.

At the same time, this chapter highlights significant variations in poor children's reading in different parts of the country:

- Poor children in London are doing relatively well – though even here the *Read On. Get On.* ambition is some way from being met.
- Some English regions – the East of England, the South East, and Yorkshire and the Humber – have a disproportionate number of parliamentary constituencies where poor children fare particularly badly in reading.
- Children from low-income families in smaller towns and rural areas are particularly likely to fall behind in reading.

OUR RESEARCH REMIT

The data used in this report comes from the National Pupil Database, which contains information about schools in England. This report therefore only refers to constituencies in England.

In this report, when groups of children are referred to as 'poor children', 'disadvantaged children' or 'children from low-income families', this refers to

children who are on free school meals. We have chosen to focus on these children because they are statistically more likely to be behind in reading than their better-off peers. Furthermore, this group makes up nearly one-fifth of all pupils.

This focus of our research should not be taken to suggest that poverty is the only causal factor for children failing to develop good early language skills and to read well at 11. We also acknowledge that

group characteristics of children on free school meals may differ from area to area. Nevertheless, focusing on getting poor children reading well at 11 will take us a long way to reaching the goal of all children reading well at 11. It is therefore important to understand regional and local variations within this group of children.

Consistent with the *Read On. Get On.* campaign's focus on reading by 11, the core measure used in this analysis is of reading levels at the age of 11. This chapter focuses on how poor children do on this measure in different parliamentary constituencies.¹² In the next chapter we look at how children fare in the years up to 11 – before they start school and through their primary school years.

READING MAPS

The maps opposite show where the best and worst places are in England in terms of poor children reading well. In the first map, the highlighted areas show the 25% of parliamentary constituencies – 133 in total – where poor children are doing best (although it is worth noting here that in almost all cases, gaps between children on free school meals and non-FSM children persist – so even in the best performing areas, poor children perform worse than their better-off classmates). Almost all of London is highlighted. In addition, there are concentrations in other large cities – for example, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham. There are relatively few rural constituencies in the top 25%, although they are more visible because they each cover a larger area.

The second map on the opposite page highlights the bottom 25% of constituencies in terms of poor children's reading. None of these constituencies are in London and very few are in other large conurbations such as the North East, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and the West Midlands. Outside of these areas, there are parliamentary constituencies that are highlighted in eight of the nine regions of the country, with the exception being the North West.

Three additional points are worth noting:

- There is a large number of coastal areas and towns where poor children are reading poorly – including much of the Suffolk and Essex coast, parts of the south coast and almost all of the Kent coast.
- Two areas have a particular concentration of parliamentary constituencies that are in the bottom 25%. One is Kent. The other stretches from the Wash into the East Midlands.

- There are a number of parliamentary constituencies in the Thames Valley and dotted around London in the South East where poor children do particularly badly in reading at 11.

POOR CHILDREN'S READING BY REGION

There is wide variation across the country in poor children's reading at 11 (see Figure 3 on page 8). Yorkshire and the Humber, the South East, and the East of England have a disproportionate number of parliamentary constituencies where poor children are unable to read well at the age of 11. These three regions also have relatively few parliamentary constituencies that are in the top 25% for poor children's reading. In the South East only three of 85 parliamentary constituencies are in the top 25%, and in the East of England only three of 57.

POOR CHILDREN'S READING IN CITIES, TOWNS AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

Figure 4 (page 8) breaks parliamentary constituencies down by degrees of urbanisation:

- Countryside constituencies are those with over 30% of the population living in rural areas; many have over 75% of people living in rural areas.
- Big city constituencies have more than half of their population living in cities or towns of over 250,000 people.
- Town and country constituencies are less than 30% rural, but are not part of a large town and city with a population of over 250,000 people. They include market towns and seaside towns.

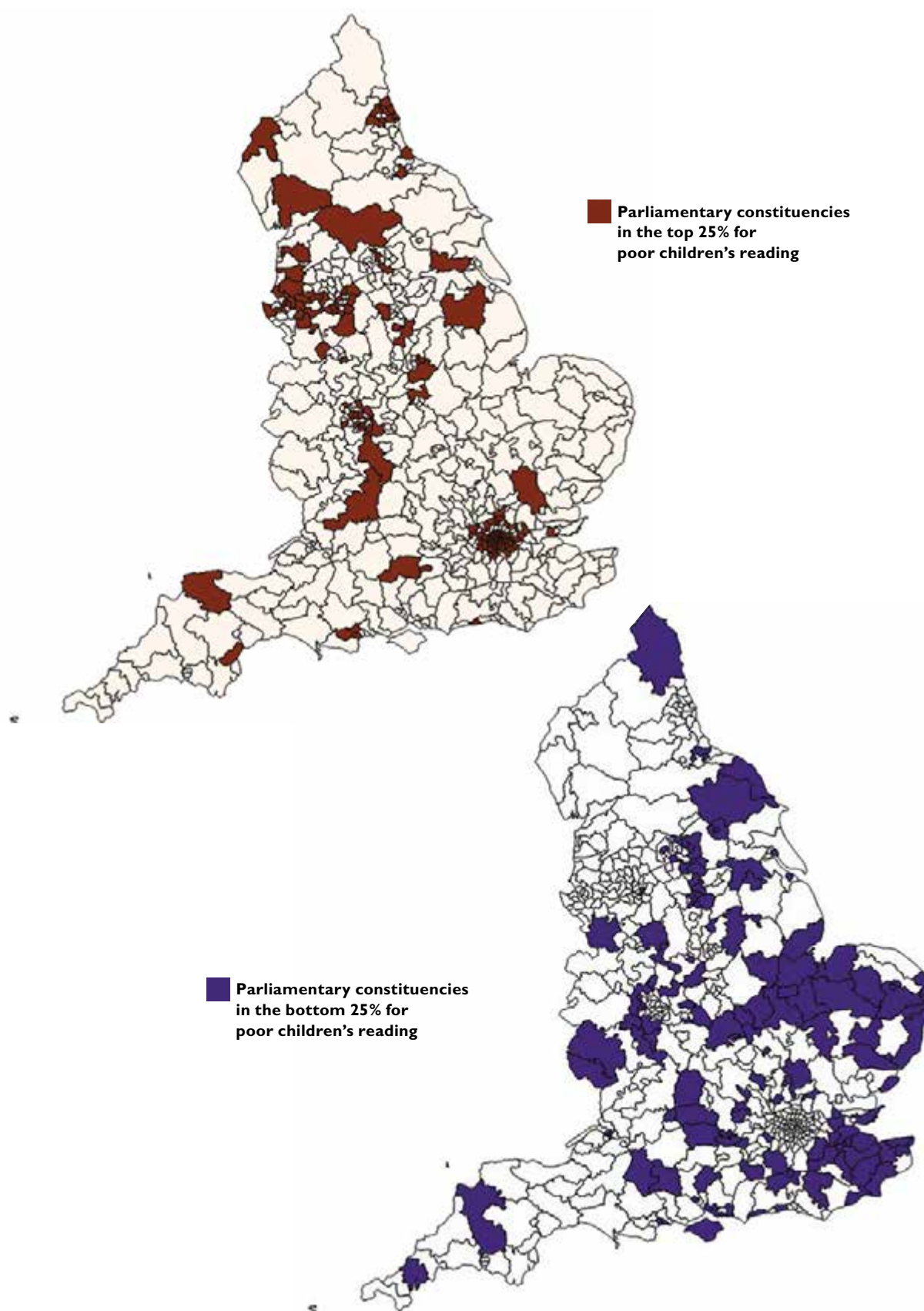
We present London as a separate category in some instances.

(See Appendix I for further details on this classification.)

As Figure 4 shows, London is the top-performing region in terms of poor children's reading, and by some distance. The vast majority of London constituencies are in the top 25%. Only one is in the third 25% band and there are none in the bottom 25%.

Figure 4 also shows that a higher proportion of big city constituencies are in the top 25% than the bottom 25% (38% compared with 18%). By contrast,

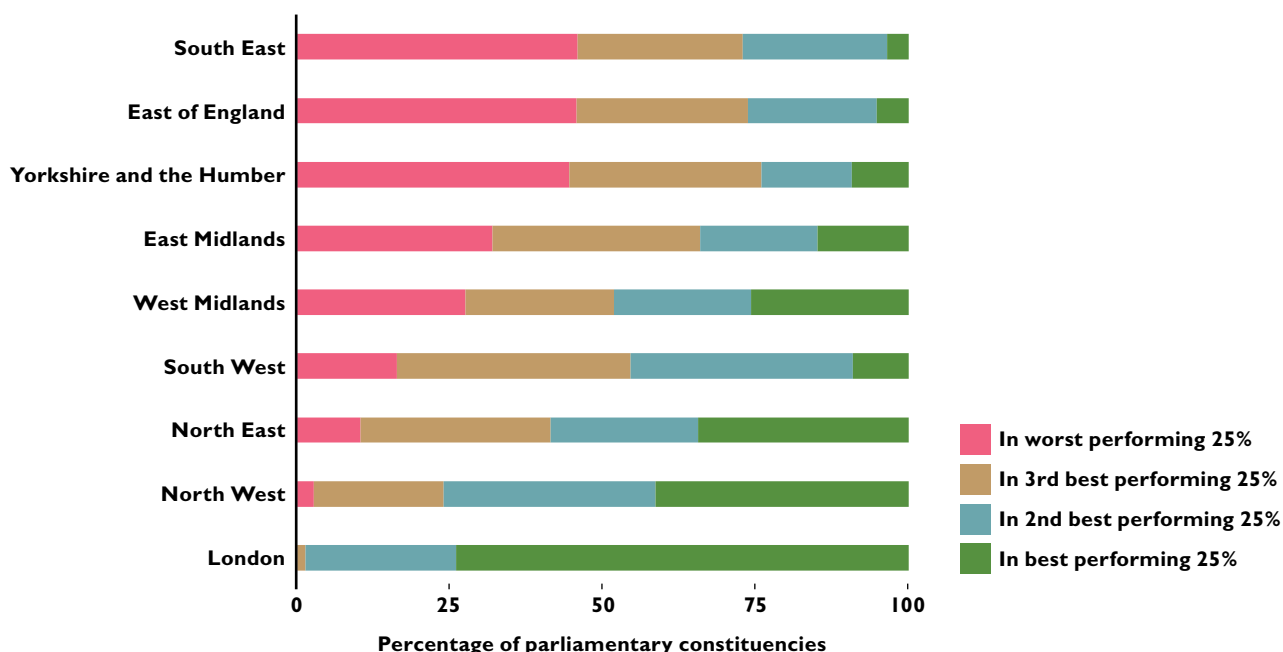
FIGURE 2 THE TOP AND BOTTOM 25% OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES FOR CHILDREN FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES TO BE READING WELL AT 11



Source: Analysis of National Pupil Database for *Read On. Get On.* campaign

Notes: (i) Poor children are identified using Free School Meals measure (ii) Reading well is measured using the current expected level, level 4. (iii) Uses 3-year average of 2011, 2012 and 2013 data

FIGURE 3 POOR CHILDREN'S READING AT 11 BY REGION



Source: Analysis of National Pupil Database for *Read On. Get On.* campaign

town and country constituencies are the other way around: 34% are in the bottom 25% and just 15% in the top 25%.

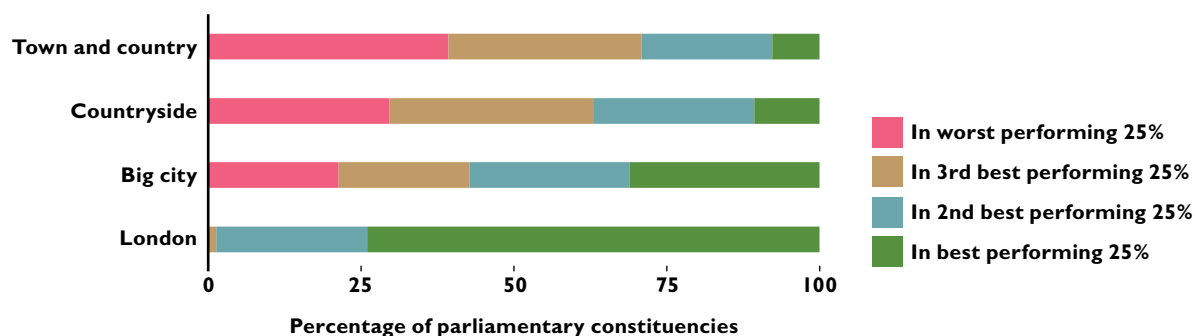
As this report set out at the start, there is no part of the country, not one local area, that has currently achieved the *Read On. Get On.* goal for poor children. Even London, which does very well for the most disadvantaged children, falls short. This gives a sense of the scale of the ambition.

But as this section demonstrates, some areas have much further to go than others. How well poor children are reading varies massively across the country.

In every region of England there are some areas where poor children are at a particular risk of falling behind. It is the case in cities, towns and rural areas, and in Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat areas.

The *Read On. Get On.* campaign has been clear that there are many different factors that we believe will play a role in getting children reading well at 11. Two big focuses will of course be the early years and schools. The next chapter explores the differences where children are falling behind in reading at 11 – examining whether this is due to children being behind when they start school, or because they are making poor progress at school, or a combination of both these factors.

FIGURE 4 HOW DIFFERENT TYPES OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES PERFORM ON POOR CHILDREN'S READING AT 11



Source: Analysis of National Pupil Database for *Read On. Get On.* campaign

LONDON – THE STAND-OUT PERFORMER, BUT STILL SHORT OF THE READ ON. GET ON. GOAL

As the maps show, London is a stand-out performer. In all other parts of the country there are parliamentary constituencies where children are falling behind. Table I shows that, of the top ten constituencies for poor children reading well by the age of 11, six are in inner London and three are in outer London. Poor children in these constituencies are doing at least 10% better at reading than the national average for this group, which is 74%.¹³ Poor children in Battersea do

almost as well at reading well (86%) as non-poor children across England – the national average for non-free school meal pupils reading well is 88%.

Nevertheless, even in London there is still some distance to go until the *Read On. Get On.* goals are achieved. Even the highest performing constituencies in London fall short of the goal. The challenge will be even greater when looking at the more advanced definition of reading well used by the *Read On. Get On.* campaign (see page 2).

TABLE I TOP TEN PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES FOR POOR CHILDREN READING AT 11

Constituency	% pupils on free school meals reading well at 11	% pupils on free school meals	Region
Battersea	86%	29%	London
Chipping Barnet	86%	16%	London
Putney	85%	24%	London
Old Bexley and Sidcup	85%	8%	London
Bermondsey and Old Southwark	85%	35%	London
Sheffield, Hallam	85%	4%	Yorkshire and the Humber
Sutton and Cheam	85%	9%	London
West Ham	85%	40%	London
Kensington	84%	36%	London
Hammersmith	84%	37%	London

Source: Analysis of National Pupil Database for *Read On. Get On.* campaign

Note: (i) Uses 3-year average of 2011, 2012 and 2013 data (ii) Uses free school meals for 'poor children' and Level 4 as the measure of reading well

3 CHALLENGES TO POOR CHILDREN'S PROGRESS: DIFFERENT ROUTES TO FALLING BEHIND AT 11

The *Read On. Get On.* campaign has set out four key drivers for children to learn to read well: early years; primary schools; mothers, fathers and carers; and communities. The findings in this report support this call for a comprehensive response to the problem.

Many primary schools are achieving very impressive results against all the odds. But what happens in schools is only part of the picture. Other factors – in particular, levels of early language development¹⁴ – are also critical to whether or not children are behind in reading by 11.

This chapter looks at how areas in different regions and categories perform in terms of poor children's language development in the early years and in reading ability at primary school. First, it shows the importance of early language development in all contexts and areas of the country.

Second, this chapter highlights the different challenges faced by different local areas in promoting poor children's reading. In some areas, the biggest challenge concerns early language development; in others there are serious questions about poor children's progress in reading during their primary school years; and other areas face an acute challenge at both stages – in children's early language development and in primary schools. We include case studies of three constituencies to illustrate these three types of challenge.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EARLY YEARS

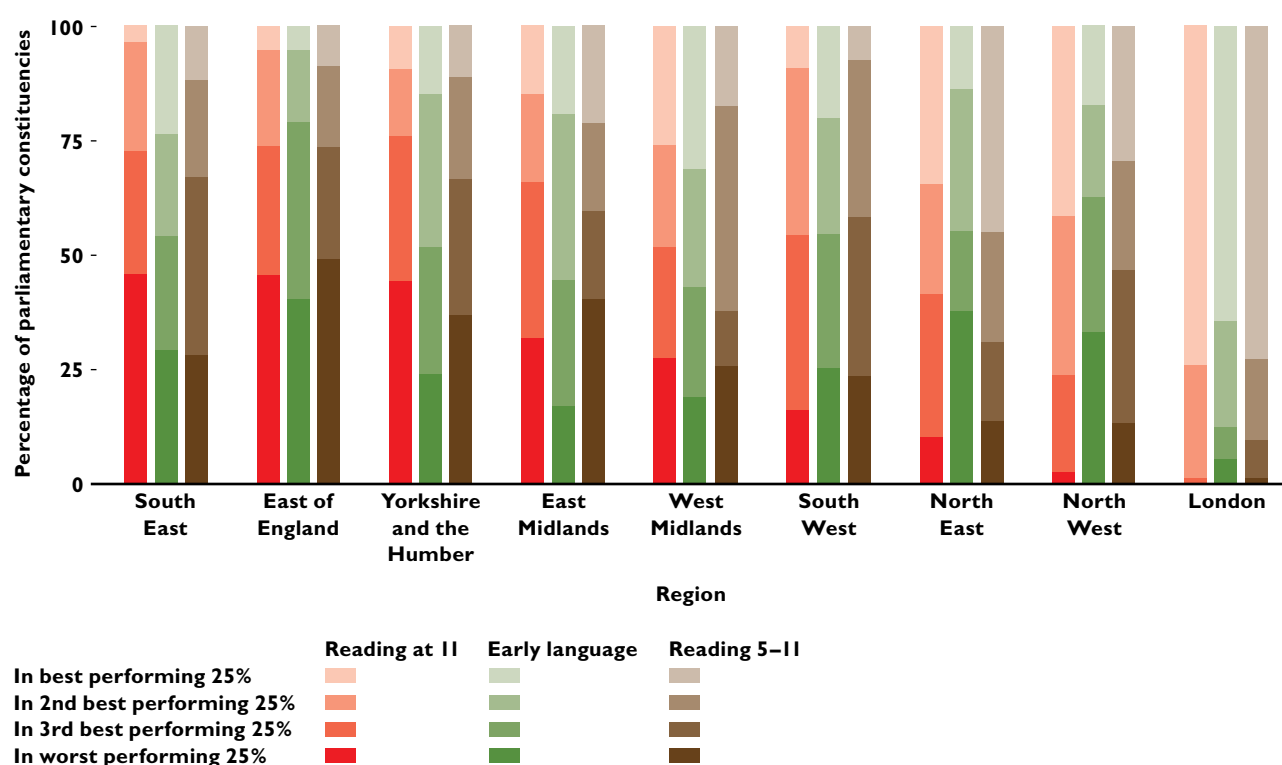
Figure 5 shows poor children's early language development and their levels of reading at 11 in the nine different English regions.

It shows first the close relationship between poor children's early language development and how well they are reading at the age of 11. Similar to the maps on page 7, Figure 5 shows that poor children in London do very well – both in early language

development and in reading at 11. By contrast, a much wider range of areas – the South East and the East of England, for example – do badly in terms of both early language for low-income children and their reading level at 11.

There are other interesting regional differences. For example, the North East and North West regions have a high proportion of constituencies in the bottom 25% for achievement in early language and literacy at five, but do better on 'reading well' at the age of 11.

FIGURE 5 POOR CHILDREN'S READING AT 11, LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AT FIVE, AND PROGRESS IN READING FROM AGE FIVE TO 11, BY REGION



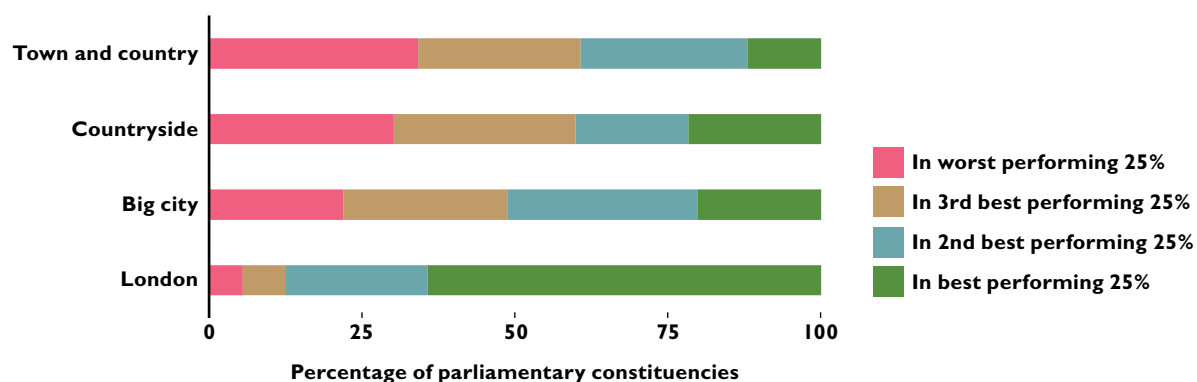
Source: Analysis of the National Pupil Database for Read On. Get On. campaign

Note: Age five literacy standard measured as proportion of children reaching expected standard on the Communication, Language and Literacy element of the Foundation Stage Profile

Figure 6 shows children's development in the early years according to the breakdown of constituencies into countryside, town and country, big city, and London. It shows a very similar pattern to that for reading at 11 (see Figure 4, page 8). London again performs well – and it is likely that children's

development in the early years is one of the factors, along with primary school performance, behind the huge gains made by the capital's secondary schools over the past ten years (see page 2). All other types of area – countryside, town and country, and cities – face a challenge.

FIGURE 6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY TYPE AND AGE-FIVE LITERACY STANDARD OF FSM PUPILS



Source: Analysis of the National Pupil Database for Read On. Get On. campaign

Note: Age five literacy standard measured as proportion of children reaching expected standard on the Communication, Language and Literacy element of the Foundation Stage Profile

DIFFERENT ROUTES FOR POOR CHILDREN TO FALL BEHIND IN READING AT 11: THREE CONSTITUENCY CASE STUDIES

Scenario 1: Poor early language development but good progress through primary school – Torridge and West Devon in the South West

Torridge and West Devon is in the bottom 25% of rural constituencies for children reading well at 11. 69% of children on FSM here are reading well at 11, compared with national averages of 75% of FSM children and 86% of non-FSM children.

Children in this constituency are falling behind before they have even reached school. Only 42% of FSM children are reaching the expected level in language and early literacy at the age of five, compared with the national average for FSM children of 51%.

However, children in this constituency then make reasonable rates of progress through primary school. Progress between the ages of five and 11 in this constituency is almost the same as the national average.

As well as continuing to improve progress between the ages of five and 11, constituencies that match this profile need to focus much more on early years if they are to reach the goal of all children reading well at 11 by 2025.

Scenario 2: Good early language development, but poor progress in reading between five and 11 – Northampton North in the East Midlands

Northampton North is in the bottom 25% of the 'town and country' category for FSM children reading well at 11. Just 61% of children on FSM are reading well at 11, compared with 75% nationally.

53% of FSM children in this constituency reach the expected level at five, compared to an FSM national average of 51%. However, children in this constituency then make very poor progress through school compared to average progress between the ages of five and 11.

Northampton North and other areas that show a similar pattern in terms of poor children's reading need to build on the early language levels during the pre-school period. And a much sharper focus is needed on poor children's reading in primary schools that recognises the continued importance of language underpinning reading.

Scenario 3: Children start school with poor early language and then make poor progress through school – Rochford and Southend East

Rochford and Southend East is in the bottom 25% for children reading well at 11 in the cities category. Poor children are significantly behind at five – only 37% of FSM children are reaching the expected level at age five.

In addition, children here make poor progress through school between ages five and 11, compared to average progress.

Areas like Rochford and Southend East face a dual challenge: both early years and primary schools will need to be a significant focus if children are to improve and if all children are to be reading well at 11 by 2025.

4 WHERE ARE READING LEVELS SLIPPING BACK – OR FORGING AHEAD?

Achieving the *Read On. Get On.* goal of all children reading well at the age of 11 by 2015 will require all areas of the country to make considerable progress. This chapter outlines why we should be optimistic about the potential for rapid improvement, but also warns of the risk of taking our eye off the ball.

The risk is that, if we lose focus on poorer children, they fall through the cracks and, in extreme cases, some areas see reading levels of poor 11 year olds slipping backwards. This section details areas that have seen just such an unacceptable trend over the last decade.

However, this chapter also charts the rapid rates of improvement seen in some parts of the country. Perhaps surprisingly, given the high performance of London constituencies described in the previous two chapters, the top ten parliamentary constituencies in terms of rates of improvement in recent years are mostly outside London.

What is more, some preliminary analysis presented here – which is a precursor to subsequent more detailed work by the *Read On. Get On.* campaign – shows how areas with similar demographic characteristics can have very different reading levels among poor children. In showing what is possible, it suggests real cause for optimism.

AREAS THAT ARE SLIPPING BACK: THE RISK OF TAKING OUR EYE OFF THE BALL

Overall, there have been improvements in reading levels over the last decade. The national data shows that in 2003, 65% of low income pupils were reading at the government's current expected level; by 2013, this had risen to 75%.

However, some parliamentary constituencies have seen worrying trends. Today, poor children in some areas are less likely to be reading well by the age of 11 than they were a decade ago; poor children's prospects have gone backwards. This needs to be kept in context – only 35 of 533 constituencies have seen results go into reverse. In addition, overall trends may mask more recent improvements in

some areas. It is also possible that there are good explanations for this fall in attainment in some areas – for example, a change in unemployment levels or job opportunities. Nevertheless, if we are to achieve the national ambition set out by *Read On. Get On.*, then it is right to shine a light on areas that are slipping back and ask why this has happened.

Table 2 (page 14) shows the ten parliamentary constituencies in which poor children's chances of reading well has regressed the most. The map in Figure 7 shows all the constituencies where results were worse in 2013 than in 2003. While these constituencies are quite broadly spread – in the countryside, towns and big cities, and one in London – they are more likely to be rural, and there is a disproportionate number in the South East.

TABLE 2 PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES WHERE FSM PUPILS ARE PERFORMING WORSE ON AVERAGE IN READING WELL AT 11 THAN TEN YEARS EARLIER (2003 TO 2013)

Parliamentary constituency	Region	Category of constituency
Drop of more than ten percentage points		
Leeds North East	Yorkshire and the Humber	Urban
Wokingham	South East	Urban
South Leicestershire	East Midlands	Rural
Bromsgrove	South East	Town
Arundel and South Downs	South East	Rural
Drop of 5–10 percentage points		
South East Cornwall	South West	Rural
Wirral South	North West	Urban
Kenilworth and Southam	West Midlands	Rural
Berwick-upon-Tweed	North East	Rural
Epsom and Ewell	South East	Urban
Mid Norfolk	East of England	Rural
Witney	South East	Rural
Hexham	North East	Rural
Richmond (Yorks)	Yorkshire and the Humber	Rural
Bexhill and Battle	South East	Rural
Drop of less than five percentage points		
Clacton	East of England	Rural
Torridge and West Devon	South West	Rural
Wantage	South East	Rural
Congleton	North West	Rural
Ludlow	West Midlands	Rural
South West Devon	South West	Rural
East Surrey	South East	Rural
Colchester	East of England	Town
Daventry	East Midlands	Rural
Epping Forest	East of England	Urban
Redditch	West Midlands	Town
South Derbyshire	East Midlands	Rural
Tiverton and Honiton	South West	Rural
Sefton Central	North West	Rural
Broadland	East of England	Rural
South Cambridgeshire	East of England	Rural
Romford	London	London
South East Cambridgeshire	East of England	Rural
Orpington	London	London
Hove	South East	Urban

Source: Analysis of the National Pupil Database for *Read On. Get On.* campaign

Notes: (i) Poor children are identified using Free School Meals measure (ii) Reading well is measured using the current expected level, level 4

The map below shows the location of the 35 parliamentary constituencies in which reading levels for poor pupils were worse in 2013 than in 2003. The 'bottom 10' are highlighted in dark red. 24 of these constituencies – 75% – are in countryside areas, compared with just six (19%) in 'big cities' outside London, and just two in London.

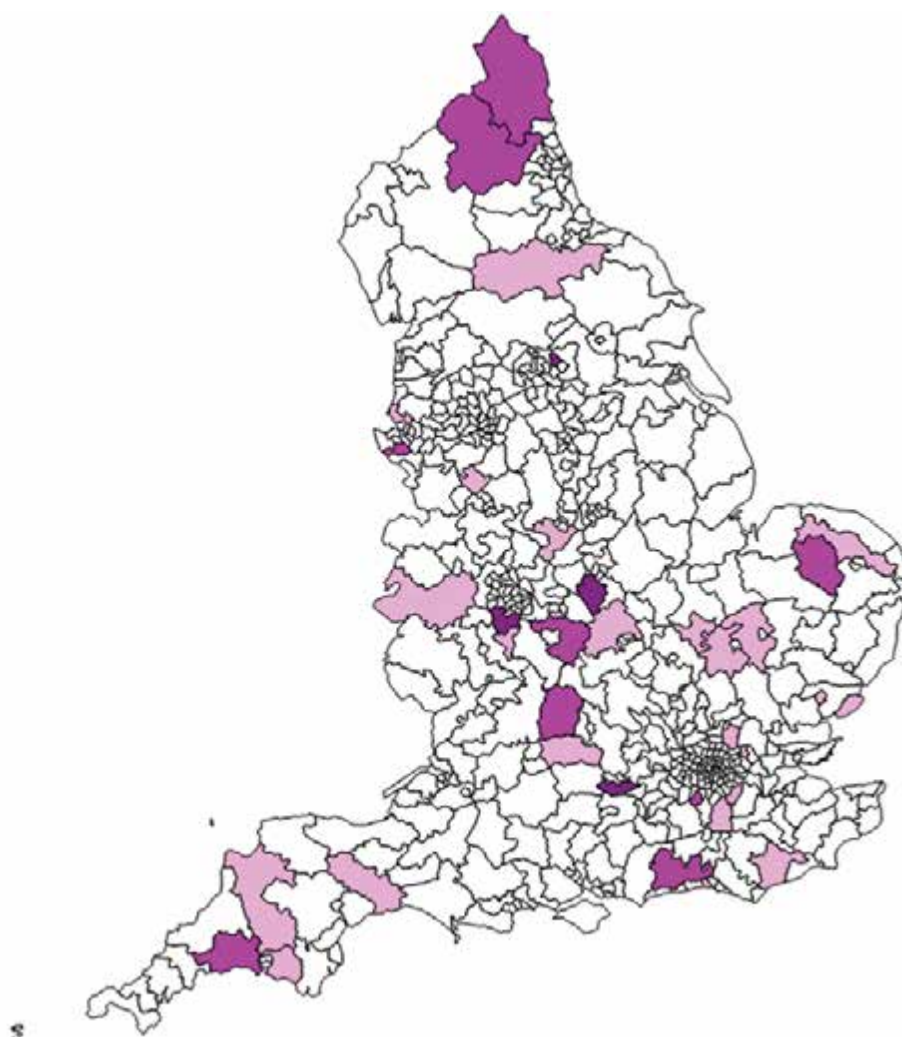
AREAS THAT HAVE FORGED AHEAD

While some parliamentary constituencies have seen poor children's reading get worse over the last decade (2003–13), just under 500 parliamentary constituencies out of 533 have either maintained or improved reading levels for poorer pupils. Some have achieved very impressive rates of improvement:

Table 3 (page 16) shows the top ten parliamentary constituencies for improvement over the last decade. Interestingly – and perhaps unexpectedly – only one of these is in London. Most London parliamentary constituencies show strong rates of progress, but not as strong as in some other parts of the country and not enough to dominate the top ten in a way that is the case for the absolute results for 11-year-olds (see page 9). To give some context, the national average rate of improvement over the same time period is 13 percentage points over ten years.

The areas identified in Table 3 have demonstrated what is possible. Taking their example, we can aspire to rapid improvements in children's reading levels at the age of 11.

FIGURE 7 PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES IN WHICH LOW-INCOME PUPILS' READING ACHIEVEMENT WAS WORSE IN 2013 THAN IN 2003



Source: Analysis of the National Pupil Database for the *Read On. Get On.* coalition

Notes: (i) Poor children are identified using Free School Meals measure (ii) Reading well is measured using the current expected level, level 4

TABLE 3 TOP TEN PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES FOR TEN-YEAR CHANGE IN POOR CHILDREN READING WELL (2003 TO 2013)

Parliamentary constituency	Change, in percentage points	Region
Sleaford and North Hykeham	37	East Midlands
Leicester West	32	East Midlands
Witham	31	East of England
West Bromwich	29	West Midlands
Copeland	29	North West
Newcastle upon Tyne North	27	North East
Blyth Valley	27	North East
Bristol South	27	South West
Nottingham South	27	East Midlands
Hackney North and Stoke Newington	26	London

Source: Analysis of the National Pupil Database for *Read On. Get On.* campaign

Notes: (i) Poor children are identified using Free School Meals measure (ii) Reading well is measured using the current expected level, level 4

THE POTENTIAL FOR IMPROVEMENT: MATCHED CONSTITUENCIES WITH WIDELY DIFFERENT RESULTS

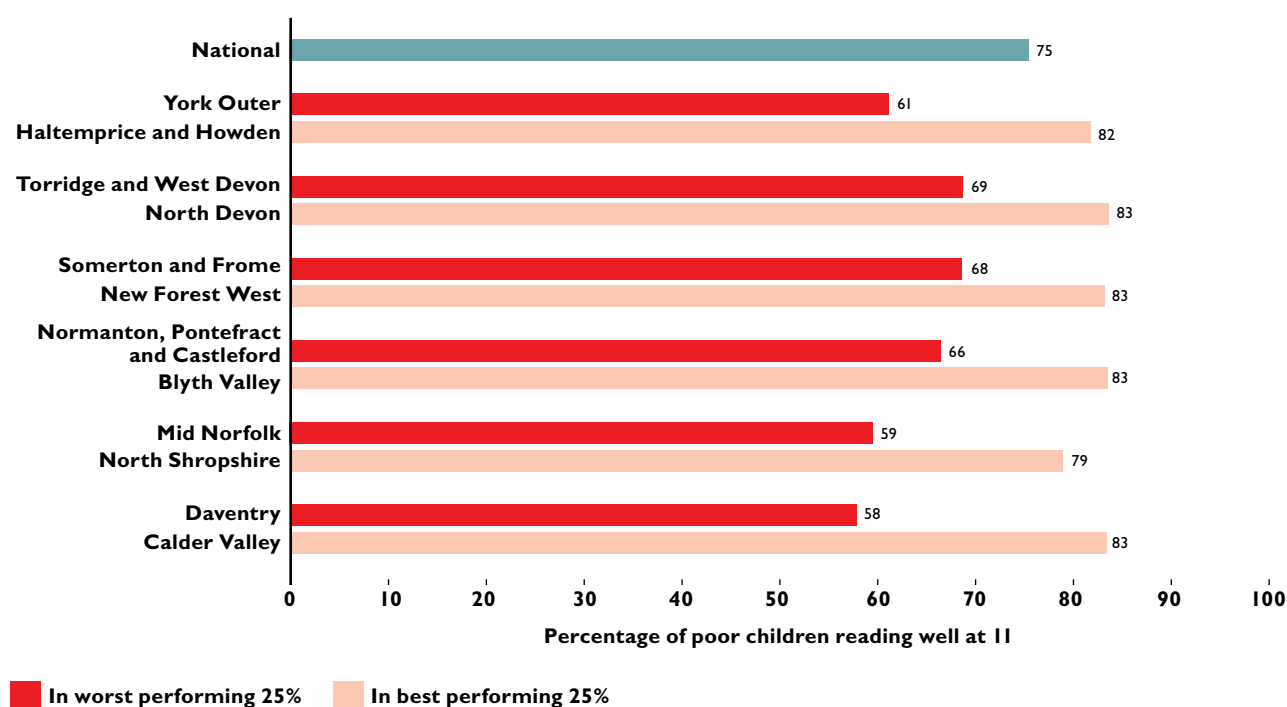
To explore the potential for improvement further, we looked at parliamentary constituencies that are similar in many respects – such as the proportion of FSM pupils, ethnic mix and degree of urbanisation but where poor children's reading levels are widely different. (Appendix 2 gives more details on how we matched parliamentary constituencies.)

Figures 8, 9 and 10 – which match rural, town and country, and urban parliamentary constituencies respectively – compare constituencies that are in the bottom 25% of performers in terms of poor children's reading at 11 with similar constituencies in the top 25%. Of course, there may be local factors not recognised in this data comparison that account for the difference between two matched

constituencies. Nevertheless, this analysis suggests it is possible for poorer children to achieve significantly more in many parts of the country.

The main message to take from these comparisons is that, in the areas where children from low-income families are reading comparatively poorly at the moment, it is possible to have high aspirations. At the same time, we recognise that local areas all face their own particular challenges. As part of the next phase of the *Read On. Get On.* work we will look at some of these areas more closely and explore the reasons why two areas that are similar in many respects are achieving very different outcomes in terms of poor children's reading. We will then look at particular lessons that can be learned from some constituencies that are performing very well, and draw out specific ways in which areas that are falling behind might be able to improve the achievement of children in their community.

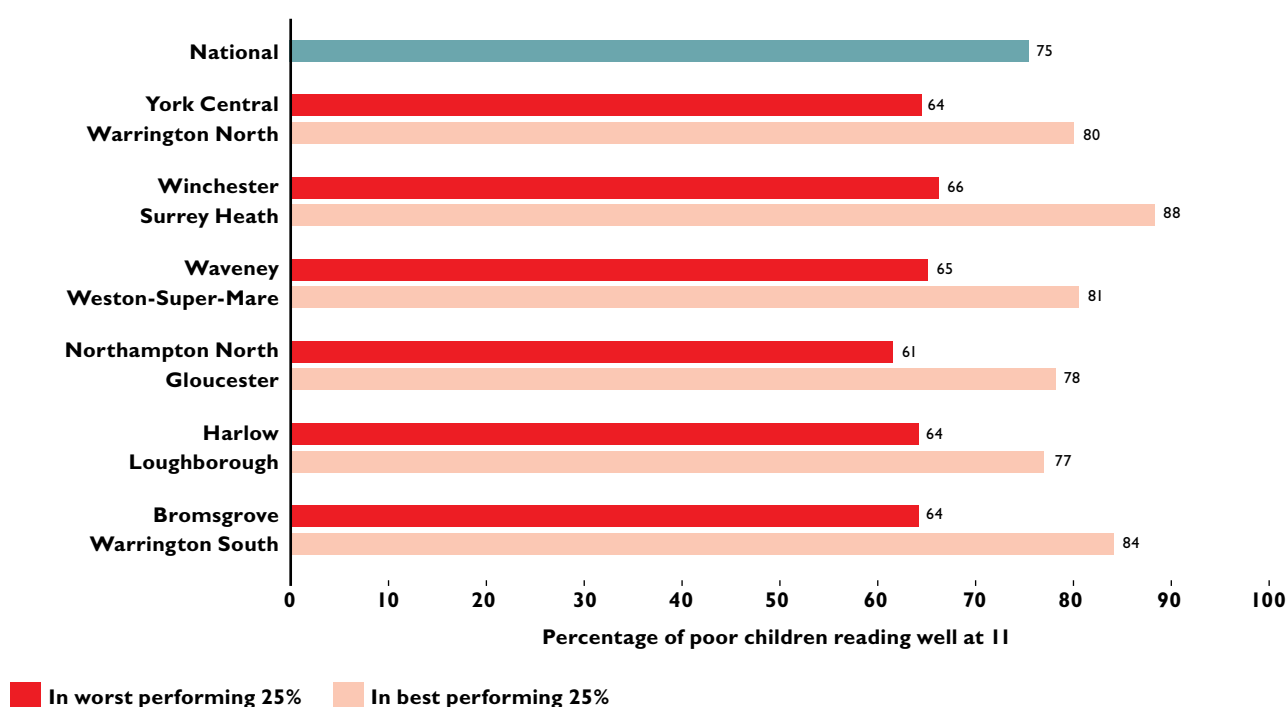
FIGURE 8 COMPARISON OF POOR CHILDREN'S READING AT 11 IN COUNTRYSIDE CONSTITUENCIES WITH SIMILAR CHARACTERISTICS



Source: Analysis of the National Pupil Database for the *Read On. Get On.* coalition

Notes: (i) Poor children measured using free school meals (ii) Reading well definition is 'level 4'

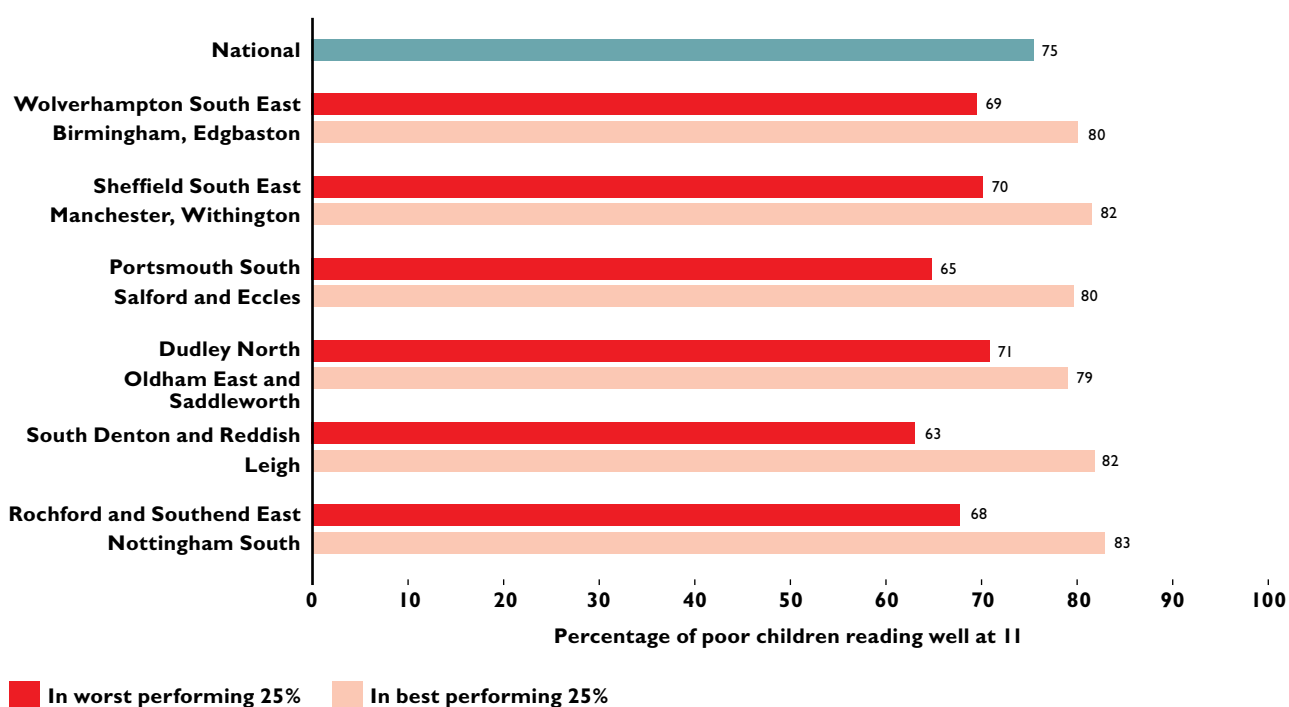
FIGURE 9 COMPARISON OF POOR CHILDREN'S READING AT 11 IN TOWN AND COUNTRY CONSTITUENCIES WITH SIMILAR CHARACTERISTICS



Source: Analysis of the National Pupil Database for the *Read On. Get On.* coalition

Notes: (i) Poor children measured using free school meals (ii) Reading well definition is 'level 4'

FIGURE 10 COMPARISON OF POOR CHILDREN'S READING AT 11 IN BIG CITY CONSTITUENCIES (EXCLUDING LONDON) WITH SIMILAR CHARACTERISTICS



Source: Analysis of the National Pupil Database for the *Read On. Get On.* coalition

Notes: (i) Poor children measured using free school meals (ii) Reading well definition is 'level 4'



TAKING ON THE READING CHALLENGE AT A LOCAL LEVEL

One example of an area that is already doing good work to aim to improve both language development and reading is **Stoke-on-Trent**. This is not to say that Stoke has yet been successful in improving achievement – but it is one of a number of areas that are seeking to address the challenge of children falling behind in reading on a local level.

The ‘Stoke Reads’ scheme, which takes place in libraries and children’s centres, coaches parents in fun techniques to get children excited about reading. This campaign was developed as a reaction to Stoke-on-Trent being bottom of the league table for seven-year-olds in reading (as well as writing and maths). Stoke Reads is one of a series of projects being planned for the next three years, targeted at everyone from pre-school children to teenagers.

The campaign builds on the ‘Stoke Speaks Out’ initiative, which focused on early language development. Again, this initiative was a reaction to data that showed that two-thirds of three-and-a-half-year-old children entering nursery in Stoke had a language delay.

The initiative is intended to teach parents the basics of language development and covers issues like dummy use, background noise, and the importance of reading and singing to your child from birth. In particular, reading to your baby is highlighted as an activity that can aid secure attachment, bonding and the development of language skills.

Sheffield’s ‘Every Sheffield Child Articulate and Literate by 11’ brings together partners across health, education and social services using a three-level approach to support children’s language development. Between 2010 and 2011 there was an improvement of seven percentage points in the proportion of five-year-old children achieving a good level of development in Communication, Language and Literacy and a significant closing of the gap between the lowest achieving children and their peers. The percentage of children in Sheffield achieving above the expected level in Reading and in Writing at age seven also increased markedly, underpinned by schools’ focus on speaking and listening.¹⁵

Two other examples of local campaigns are in Oxfordshire and Middlesbrough. Working with the National Literacy Trust, these areas are working in different ways to get children reading. In **Oxfordshire**, the focus is on working in primary schools, ensuring that children who are falling behind have the support that they need.

In **Middlesbrough** the campaign will focus on promoting children’s reading in the community – among children and families in the local area – through a range of exciting projects, activities and events. The campaign aims to bring together national and local partners.

5 CONCLUSION

Earlier in 2014, the *Read On. Get On.* campaign called for commitment to the goal of getting all children reading well at age 11 by 2025. In order to achieve this goal, there needs to be a step change in the action taken to get children reading, with particular focus on the poorest children.

This campaign needs schools, parents, early years services and the wider community to unite and to own the goal of all children reading well. If we are going to achieve this ambitious goal, it will require changes to national government policy, action by civil society at local and national levels, businesses to play a role, and the whole of society to celebrate the joy of reading as part of our national conversation.

Alongside this, local communities, schools and parents will need to 'own' the *Read On. Get On.* ambition. We will never achieve a nation where all children are reading well, without local action. We know that, along with policy change and action on a national level, this is key to achieving change.

A key purpose of this report is to raise awareness of areas that have the hardest job because they have the furthest to go in reaching the goal of getting all children from low-income families reading well, and to highlight the nature of that challenge. And alongside raising awareness, we aim to increase expectations and improve understanding so that local areas can take action accordingly.

It is also important for different areas to learn from each other. Lasting change for children is enabled by decisions made by central government, but ultimately it is about schools, pre-school professionals, local government and communities learning from the successes of other areas. This approach to improvement is in keeping with the emphasis on schools learning from the experience of others in their 'family of schools' – that is, schools that share similar circumstances.

As we have clearly set out in this report, all areas across the country have some way to go to meet the goal of all children reading well at 11 by 2025. The *Read On. Get On.* coalition will drive this campaign for many years but, to a great degree, in order to be successful, this campaign must be owned locally.

The *Read On. Get On.* campaign is therefore working towards:

- all early years settings and schools signing up to support and promote the achievement of the *Read On. Get On.* goal in their local community
- working with early years leads and headteachers to become champions of the campaign, with some settings and schools becoming beacons of good practice for working with their local communities to celebrate and improve reading
- the creation of talking and reading towns and cities, which, critically, bring together schools and early years services, following the lead of places like Sheffield, which have embedded a focus on language and literacy in early years settings and schools to improve reading levels.

The *Read On. Get On.* campaign will be reporting in early 2015 on what policy change we believe needs to happen in the next Parliament to reach a goal of all children reading well at 11 by 2025. As this report highlights, this will need to cover both early years and schools policy.

This report indicates where some of the challenges lie in getting all children reading, and provides some pointers for future action. These could include facilitating area-to-area and school-to-school learning – so that areas and schools that are not doing well learn from their peers; this is one of the best ways of ensuring lasting improvement. In regions outside London, there may be a case for schemes that are similar to the London Challenge, but which focus on children under 11 rather than secondary schools, and include primary schools, pre-school providers, local authorities and communities.

APPENDIX I: 'COUNTRYSIDE', 'BIG CITY' AND 'TOWN AND COUNTRY' CLASSIFICATION

The classification of areas into 'Countryside', 'big city' and 'town and country' was carried out using a classification of parliamentary constituencies from the Rural Evidence Research Centre.¹⁶ The generation of our categories worked as follows:

In stage 1, Census Output Areas (COAs) are allocated to four broad classes according to whether they are located within one of the following types of area:

- the six 'major urban areas', with a population of more than 750,000
- the 17 'large urban areas', with a population between 250,000 and 750,000
- an urban area with a population of more than 10,000 that is not identified as a 'larger market town'
- the remaining 'rural' set of COAs are deemed to be 'rural' under the new rural/urban definition, but includes those COAs comprising the 'larger market towns'

The main classification generated is:

- a 'major urban' constituency has at least 50% of its population within a major urban area
- a 'large urban' constituency has at least 50% of its population within a 'large urban area'

- an 'other urban' constituency has less than 30% of its population rural and does not qualify as a 'major urban' or 'large urban' constituency
- a 'significant rural' constituency has more than 30% but less than 50% of its population in rural settlements (including 'larger market towns' where these occur)
- a 'rural 50' constituency has more than 50% but less than 75% of its population in rural settlements (including 'larger market towns' where these occur)
- a 'rural 75' constituency has more than 75% of its population in rural settlements (including 'larger market towns' where these occur).

We have then generated our classification by simplifying the above classification into:

- London as a separate category
- 'major urban' and 'large urban' grouped as 'big cities'
- 'other urban' as a single category – 'town and country'
- 'significant rural', 'rural 50' and 'rural 75' all grouped as 'countryside'.

APPENDIX 2: DETAILS ON THE ‘MATCHED AREAS’

This appendix presents details on the matched areas. In each table the pairs of areas are presented with the area where children read poorly in bold, followed by the matched area. We have matched areas using three factors:

- degree of urbanisation
- percentage of pupils on free schools meals
- percentage of non-white pupil population

FIGURE A1 COUNTRYSIDE: CASE STUDY AREAS AND THEIR MATCHED PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY

Parliamentary constituency	Region	Pupils on free school meals (%)	Non-white ethnicity (%)
Daventry	East Midlands	11	7
Calder Valley	Yorkshire and the Humber	12	6
Mid Norfolk	East of England	11	7
North Shropshire	West Midlands	11	6
Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford	Yorkshire and the Humber	19	6
Blyth Valley	North East	21	4
Somerton and Frome	South West	10	6
New Forest West	South East	9	7
Torridge and West Devon	South West	14	5
North Devon	South West	14	4
York Outer	Yorkshire and the Humber	5	7
Haltemprice and Howden	Yorkshire and the Humber	5	5

Source: Analysis of the National Pupil Database for *Read On. Get On.* coalition

FIGURE A2 BIG CITIES: CASE STUDY AREAS AND THEIR MATCHED PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY

Parliamentary constituency	Region	Pupils on free school meals (%)	Non-white ethnicity (%)
Rochford and Southend East	East of England	23	18
Nottingham South	East Midlands	23	45
Denton and Reddish	North West	18	9
Leigh	North West	17	6
Dudley North	West Midlands	24	26
Oldham East and Saddleworth	North West	23	34
Portsmouth South	South East	26	23
Salford and Eccles	North West	26	19
Sheffield South East	Yorkshire and the Humber	19	30
Manchester, Withington	North West	22	46
Wolverhampton South East	West Midlands	34	43
Birmingham, Edgbaston	West Midlands	34	45

Source: Analysis of the National Pupil Database for *Read On. Get On.* coalition

FIGURE A3 TOWN AND COUNTRY: CASE STUDY AREAS AND THEIR MATCHED PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY

Parliamentary constituency	Region	Pupils on free school meals (%)	Non-white ethnicity (%)
Bromsgrove	West Midlands	8	7
Warrington South	North West	9	10
Harlow	East of England	16	20
Loughborough	East Midlands	16	20
Northampton North	East Midlands	23	34
Gloucester	South West	18	24
Waveney	East of England	18	5
Weston-Super-Mare	South West	17	8
Winchester	South East	8	15
Surrey Heath	South East	7	19
York Central	Yorkshire and the Humber	17	12
Warrington North	North West	17	8

Source: Analysis of the National Pupil Database for *Read On. Get On.* coalition

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES FOR LOW-INCOME CHILDREN READING AT 11

This list is based on data that shows the percentage of free school meal pupils reaching the expected level (Level 4) in reading at age 11 (Key Stage 2).

This data is from the National Pupil Database and is based on the average over three years (2010/2011, 2011/2012, 2012/2013 data).

Constituencies are not ranked in order. In each category, constituencies are ranked alphabetically.

I. BOTTOM QUARTILE OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

There are 134 parliamentary constituencies (out of a total of 533 parliamentary constituencies) in the bottom quartile for low-income children reading well at age 11, based on data over the past three years. The list is divided into sub-categories: a) the bottom 25; b) the bottom 25–50; c) the bottom 50–100.

THE BOTTOM 25 PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

Ashford	Maidstone and The Weald	Rotherham
Basildon and Billericay	Mid Worcestershire	Scarborough and Whitby
Berwick-upon-Tweed	Mole Valley	Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough
Clacton	Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford	South East Cambridgeshire
Daventry	North West Leicestershire	South Thanet
Derby South	Northampton North	South West Bedfordshire
Faversham and Mid Kent	Northampton South	Waveney
Great Yarmouth	Norwich South	Wokingham
Ipswich		

THE BOTTOM 25–50 CONSTITUENCIES

Barnsley East	Crawley	Peterborough
Batley and Spen	Dudley South	Salisbury
Bognor Regis and Littlehampton	Elmet and Rothwell	Scunthorpe
Bournemouth West	Gravesham	Sittingbourne and Sheppey
Brigg and Goole	Great Grimsby	South West Norfolk
Burton	Hemsworth	South West Wiltshire
Bury St Edmunds	Leeds East	York Central
Canterbury	Leeds North East	
Chatham and Aylesford	North East Cambridgeshire	

THE BOTTOM 50–100 CONSTITUENCIES

Aylesbury	Lincoln	South Norfolk
Bracknell	Mansfield	South Staffordshire
Bristol East	Mid Norfolk	South Suffolk
Bristol West	Newbury	South West Surrey
Denton and Reddish	North East Hertfordshire	Spelthorne
Dudley North	North Swindon	Suffolk Coastal
East Worthing and Shoreham	North Thanet	Tamworth
Eddisbury	North West Cambridgeshire	Thirsk and Malton
Folkestone and Hythe	Norwich North	Wantage
Gillingham and Rainham	Nuneaton	Wealden
Gosport	Portsmouth South	Wellingborough
Grantham and Stamford	Redditch	Wentworth and Dearne
Harlow	Rochester and Strood	Winchester
Hastings and Rye	Rochford and Southend East	Witney
Hereford and South Herefordshire	Sevenoaks	Wyre Forest
Horsham	Sheffield South East	York Outer
Kettering	Sheffield, Heeley	

ALSO IN THE BOTTOM QUARTILE: RANKED BETWEEN 100–134

Bedford	Leeds North West	St Albans
Boston and Skegness	Middlesbrough	Staffordshire Moorlands
Bournemouth East	Newark	Stevenage
Bradford West	North Herefordshire	Stockton North
Bromsgrove	North West Norfolk	Tonbridge and Malling
Cannock Chase	Reading East	Torridge and West Devon
Corby	Reading West	Truro and Falmouth
Coventry South	Rother Valley	Wakefield
Fareham	Rugby	Wolverhampton South West
Havant	South Basildon and East Thurrock	Wycombe
Isle of Wight	South Holland and The Deepings	
Kingston upon Hull East	Southampton Test	

2. THIRD QUARTILE OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES (BELOW AVERAGE)

The following parliamentary constituencies are all in the third quartile for low-income children reading well at age 11, based on data for 2010–13:

Amber Valley	East Surrey	Penistone and Stocksbridge
Ashfield	East Yorkshire	Penrith and The Border
Banbury	Eastbourne	Plymouth, Moor View
Barnsley Central	Eastleigh	Portsmouth North
Beaconsfield	Epsom and Ewell	Redcar
Beverley and Holderness	Erewash	Reigate
Bexleyheath and Crayford	Esher and Walton	Richmond (Yorks)
Birmingham, Ladywood	Filton and Bradley Stoke	Rochdale
Birmingham, Northfield	Forest of Dean	Romsey and Southampton North
Bishop Auckland	Fylde	Rossendale and Darwen
Blackburn	Guildford	Rutland and Melton
Bolton North East	Harborough	Sedgefield
Bosworth	Harrogate and Knaresborough	Sheffield Central
Bradford East	Henley	Sherwood
Bradford South	Hertford and Stortford	Shipley
Bridgwater and West Somerset	Hexham	Somerton and Frome
Brighton, Kemptown	Hitchin and Harpenden	South Cambridgeshire
Bristol North West	Hove	South Derbyshire
Bristol South	Huddersfield	South Dorset
Broadland	Huntingdon	South East Cornwall
Burnley	Hyndburn	South Leicestershire
Bury South	Lancaster and Fleetwood	South Northamptonshire
Cambridge	Leeds Central	South Swindon
Carlisle	Leeds West	South West Devon
Central Devon	Leicester East	Stafford
Central Suffolk and North Ipswich	Leicester West	Stockport
Chelmsford	Lewes	Stoke-on-Trent North
Cheltenham	Loughborough	The Wrekin
Chichester	Louth and Horncastle	Thurrock
Chippenham	Ludlow	Tiverton and Honiton
Christchurch	Maidenhead	Torbay
Cleethorpes	Maldon	Totnes
Colchester	Meon Valley	Tunbridge Wells
Colne Valley	Mid Bedfordshire	Wansbeck
Congleton	Morecambe and Lunesdale	Warley
Coventry North East	New Forest East	Warwick and Leamington
Coventry North West	Newcastle upon Tyne Central	Watford
Darlington	North Dorset	West Dorset
Dartford	North Durham	West Suffolk
Derby North	North East Bedfordshire	West Worcestershire
Derbyshire Dales	North Norfolk	Wirral South
Don Valley	North Shropshire	Wolverhampton South East
Doncaster Central	North Warwickshire	Yeovil
Dover	Oxford East	
Easington	Pendle	

3. SECOND QUARTILE OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES (ABOVE AVERAGE)

The following parliamentary constituencies are all in the bottom quartile for low-income children reading well at age 11, based on data for 2010–13:

Aldershot	Halesowen and Rowley Regis	Orpington
Arundel and South Downs	Halifax	Oxford West and Abingdon
Ashton-under-Lyne	Harrow East	Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport
Barking	Harrow West	Preston
Barrow and Furness	Harwich and North Essex	Rayleigh and Wickford
Bassetlaw	Hayes and Harlington	Ribble Valley
Bath	Hemel Hempstead	Romford
Bexhill and Battle	Hertsmere	Runnymede and Weybridge
Birmingham, Erdington	Heywood and Middleton	Salford and Eccles
Birmingham, Yardley	High Peak	Selby and Ainsty
Blackley and Broughton	Hornsey and Wood Green	Shrewsbury and Atcham
Blackpool North and Cleveleys	Houghton and Sunderland South	Sleaford and North Hykeham
Blackpool South	Ilford South	Slough
Bolton South East	Keighley	South West Hertfordshire
Bolton West	Kenilworth and Southam	Southampton, Itchen
Bootle	Kingston and Surbiton	Southend West
Braintree	Kingston upon Hull North	Southport
Brent Central	Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle	St Austell and Newquay
Brentwood and Ongar	Kingswood	St Ives
Brighton, Pavilion	Leicester South	Stoke-on-Trent Central
Broxtowe	Leyton and Wanstead	Stone
Buckingham	Lichfield	Stretford and Urmston
Bury North	Liverpool, Wavertree	Stroud
Calder Valley	Luton North	Sunderland Central
Camborne and Redruth	Luton South	Surrey Heath
Chesham and Amersham	Manchester, Gorton	Tatton
Chorley	Mid Derbyshire	Taunton Deane
City of Chester	Mid Sussex	Telford
City of Durham	Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	Tewkesbury
Copeland	Milton Keynes North	Thornbury and Yate
Croydon Central	Milton Keynes South	Tottenham
Croydon South	New Forest West	Wallasey
Devizes	Newcastle upon Tyne East	Walsall North
Dewsbury	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Walsall South
Doncaster North	North Cornwall	Walthamstow
East Devon	North East Derbyshire	Warrington North
East Hampshire	North East Hampshire	Washington and Sunderland West
Edmonton	North East Somerset	Wells
Ellesmere Port and Neston	North Somerset	Welwyn Hatfield
Epping Forest	North West Durham	Weston-Super-Mare
Exeter	North Wiltshire	Wigan
Feltham and Heston	Nottingham North	Windsor
Finchley and Golders Green	Nottingham South	Witham
Garston and Halewood		Woking
Gloucester		Worcester

4. TOP QUARTILE: PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

The following parliamentary constituencies are all in the top quartile for low-income children reading well at age 11, based on data for 2010–13. This list is divided into sub-categories:

a) the top 25; b) the top 25–50; c) the top 50–100.

TOP 25

Altrincham and Sale West	Hammersmith	Saffron Walden
Battersea	Hampstead and Kilburn	Sheffield, Hallam
Bermondsey and Old Southwark	Holborn and St Pancras	Sutton and Cheam
Bethnal Green and Bow	Kensington	Tooting
Chipping Barnet	Lewisham, Deptford	Vauxhall
Dulwich and West Norwood	Old Bexley and Sidcup	West Ham
Eltham	Poplar and Limehouse	
Greenwich and Woolwich	Putney	
Hackney North and Stoke	Richmond Park	
Newington	Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner	

TOP 25–50

Bromley and Chislehurst	Lewisham East	Tynemouth
Castle Point	Lewisham West and Penge	Uxbridge and South Ruislip
Charnwood	Meriden	West Lancashire
Chelsea and Fulham	Newcastle upon Tyne North	Westminster North
Cities of London and Westminster	Rushcliffe	Wimbledon
Ealing, Southall	Sefton Central	Wirral West
Hackney South and Shoreditch	Solihull	Wyre and Preston North
Islington North	St Helens South and Whiston	
Jarrow	Twickenham	

TOP 50–100

Aldridge-Brownhills	Enfield, Southgate	Newton Abbot
Basingstoke	Erith and Thamesmead	North Devon
Birkenhead	Gateshead	North Tyneside
Birmingham, Hall Green	Gedling	North West Hampshire
Birmingham, Hodge Hill	Haltemprice and Howden	Skipton and Ripon
Birmingham, Perry Barr	Halton	South Ribble
Birmingham, Selly Oak	Hazel Grove	South Shields
Blaydon	Hendon	St Helens North
Bolsover	Hornchurch and Upminster	Stourbridge
Brent North	Islington South and Finsbury	Streatham
Brentford and Isleworth	Knowsley	Sutton Coldfield
Camberwell and Peckham	Leigh	Weaver Vale
Carshalton and Wallington	Liverpool, Riverside	West Bromwich West
Cheadle	Liverpool, Walton	Westmorland and Lonsdale
Chingford and Woodford Green	Liverpool, West Derby	Workington
Dagenham and Rainham	Manchester Central	Wythenshawe and Sale East
East Ham	Manchester, Withington	

ALSO IN THE TOP QUARTILE OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

Beckenham	Hartlepool	Pudsey
Birmingham, Edgbaston	Ilford North	Stalybridge and Hyde
Blyth Valley	Macclesfield	Stockton South
Broxbourne	Makerfield	Stoke-on-Trent South
Chesterfield	Mid Dorset and North Poole	Stratford-on-Avon
Crewe and Nantwich	Mitcham and Morden	The Cotswolds
Croydon North	Morley and Outwood	Warrington South
Ealing Central and Acton	Nottingham East	West Bromwich East
Ealing North	Oldham East and Saddleworth	Wolverhampton North East
Enfield North	Oldham West and Royton	Worsley and Eccles South
Gainsborough	Poole	Worthing West

ENDNOTES

¹ Statistics from Department for Education, National Curriculum Assessments at Key Stage 2, 2012 to 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-assessments-at-key-stage-2-2012-to-2013>

² Statistics from Department for Education, National Curriculum Assessments at Key Stage 2, 2012 to 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-assessments-at-key-stage-2-2012-to-2013>

³ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, *Skills for Life survey: Appendix of tables*, London: DfBIS, 2011

⁴ Department for Education, *Reforming assessment and accountability for primary schools: Government response to consultation on primary school assessment and accountability*, 2014, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/297595/Primary_Accountability_and_Assessment_Consultation_Response.pdf

⁵ Our common sense explanation of this level of reading, as set out in *Read On. Get On.*: How reading can help children escape poverty is: “‘Reading well’ by the age of 11 means that children should not only be able to read the words that are written down, but they should also have a wider understanding of the meaning behind stories and information and be able to talk about them and comment on them. As well as being able to read and understand books such as *Treasure Island* or a Harry Potter book, they should also be able to read a range of different materials, including magazines and newspapers, many websites, letters and dictionaries.”

⁶ See Ofsted, *Unseen Children: Access and achievement 20 years on*, 2013, <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/unseen-children-access-and-achievement-20-years>

⁷ See Ofsted, *Unseen Children: Access and achievement 20 years on*, 2013, page 24, <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/unseen-children-access-and-achievement-20-years>

⁸ S Barrs et al, *Lessons from London Schools: Investigating the success*, page 9, Centre for London and CfBT Education Trust, 2014, <http://cdn.cfbt.com/~media/cfbtcorporate/files/research/2014/r-london-schools-2014.pdf>

⁹ S Barrs et al, *Lessons from London Schools: Investigating the success*, chapter 5, from page 97, Centre for London and CfBT Education Trust, 2014, <http://cdn.cfbt.com/~media/cfbtcorporate/files/research/2014/r-london-schools-2014.pdf>

¹⁰ E Greaves, L Macmillan and L Sibieta, Institute for Fiscal Studies and Institute of Education, *Lessons from London Schools for Attainment Gaps and Social Mobility: Research report*, Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2014, http://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/docs/london_schools_june2014.pdf

¹¹ E Greaves et al – see note 10

¹² For all the reading-at-11 results in this chapter we have used ‘three year averages’ – for 2011, 2012 and 2013 – rather than rely on one year’s results. The reason for this is that in some areas, particularly those with a smaller number of FSM pupils, there will be a natural variation from year to year. However, when looking at averages over three years we can be more confident that we are recording the real level of reading among poor children in these areas.

¹³ This is based on the national average over the three years 2011, 2012 and 2013. The figures were 71%, 77% and 75%. These are the same years for which we are basing the three-year averages for each constituency on. The exact figure is 74.3%.

¹⁴ This report uses children’s early language development, as measured through the Early Years Foundation Profile (the EYFS). The measure uses the ‘Communications, Language and Literacy’ element of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and includes a mix of skills, including early phonics – linking sounds and letters – some measures of reading, and writing. We have chosen this broader measure of communication and literacy, rather than just reading, as this better reflects the language skills that are necessary at an early age and on which solid reading when older is then developed.

¹⁵ J Gross, *Two Years On: Final report of the Communication Champion for children*, Office of the Communication Champion, 2011

¹⁶ Rural Evidence Research Centre, *A Classification of Parliamentary Constituencies by Rural–Urban Type and an Analysis of General Election Results 2001–2005*, http://public.hildebrand.co.uk/lerc/findings/documents_rural/RD7PCClassn_Guide.pdf

READING ENGLAND'S FUTURE

Mapping how well the poorest children read

COVER PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

The *Read On. Get On.* campaign has brought together a wide range of organisations to take action towards a historic goal for the UK: all children should be reading well by the age of 11 by 2025.

Reading England's Future charts the geography of reading disadvantage in England, by comparing the reading ability of poor children across parliamentary constituencies. The research finds that every area in the country needs to make significant improvements; however, some have further to travel than others.

This report provides new analysis on the types of areas that face the biggest challenges in getting all children reading well, and calls on local communities to join the campaign and to support and promote our goal.

Helping children read

Achievement for All 

Beanstalk
Read • Grow • Succeed

booktrust
Inspiring a love of books

HarperCollins

ican
helps children communicate

NAHT
FOR LEADERS, FOR LEARNERS

National
Literacy
Trust

THE PUBLISHERS
ASSOCIATION

THE
READING
AGENCY



Save the Children

TeachFirst