

# A Failed Generation

*Educational Inequality under Labour*

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# Summary

This note documents the level of inequality under Labour. It shows that inequality in our schools is high, that it has grown, and that our education system entrenches disadvantage.

## Inequality in our schools

- **Geographical inequality.**
  - 55% of secondary schools in the 10% most deprived parts of England do not achieve 30% of children getting five good GCSEs including English and maths – the Government's official benchmark for a failing school. This is compared to just 3 per cent in the 10 per cent least deprived areas.
  - Last year five local authorities – including Islington, Darlington and Blackpool – did not have a single pupil from a maintained school attempt GCSE Physics.
- **Social inequality**
  - Last year, over 60 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals did not gain the 3Rs at Key Stage 2.
  - Shockingly, 33,909 pupils eligible to receive free school meals did not attain any GCSE grades higher than a D in 2006/07 – **47 per cent** of all FSM pupils.

## Growing inequality under Labour

- In the last year, the attainment gap at GCSE between the poorest areas and the wealthiest widened by 15 percentage points – from 28 per cent to 43 per cent.
- In 2002, the gap between free school meal pupils and the rest in science at Key Stage 2 was 10 percentage points; it now stands at 15. And the gap has widened to 20 percentage points in maths – up from 16 points in 2002.

## Entrenching advantage

- In 2002, at Key Stage 2 (aged 11), the gap between 11 year-olds eligible for free school meals (FSM) and those who were not reaching the expected level was 26 points for English, 16 points for maths and 10 points for science.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hansard, 29 Jan 2008; Key Stage 2 results. The expected level, according to the Government, is level 4. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhsrd/cm080129/text/80129w0015.htm>

- In 2005, for the same pupils aged 14 this gap had grown to 27 points for English, 27 points for maths and 30 points for science.<sup>2</sup>
- And in 2007, by the time pupils came to take GCSEs 21.1 per cent of FSM pupils gained five good GCSEs including English and maths, compared to 49 per cent of non-FSM pupils - a gap of nearly 28 per cent.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000671/index.shtml> Tables 83,84,85. Key stage 4 results. The expected level is level 5.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000759/index.shtml> Table 17.

# Introduction

Schools should be the engines of social mobility – where talent and hard work, not background, determine success. Yet this government has not only failed to narrow the gap between richest and poorest, it has allowed it to widen. This document shows that opportunity is not equal in our schools, and it has become less equal.

It also shows that schools are engines of social *immobility* – they entrench disadvantage. At every stage, the most disadvantaged pupils fall further behind their peers. They do not obtain the qualifications on which future success is increasingly dependent, and they are more likely to have a poor school experience. Children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to play truant and to be excluded, which in turn makes it more difficult for them to succeed.

Regardless of other countries' performance, we consider the level of social and income inequality in our schools to be a tragedy. Nevertheless, those who say that no improvement can be made should look abroad.

A study has shown that intergenerational mobility in Britain is substantially lower than Canada and the Nordic countries. It has also shown that, while mobility is no better in the United States, they have not seen the same decline in social mobility as Britain – while other countries improve or stand still, we fall behind.<sup>4</sup>

## A divided society – geographical inequality

Our schools reflect deep geographical inequalities. Areas of social deprivation are also those with the schools that have been classed by the government as ‘failing’. Of the 638 schools with fewer than 30 per cent of pupils gaining five good GCSEs 144 schools – almost a quarter – were in the 10 per cent most deprived areas.<sup>5</sup>

- This means that 56 per cent of all schools in the 10 per cent most deprived areas had fewer than 30 per cent of pupils gaining five good GCSEs compared to just 3 per cent in the 10 per cent least deprived areas.
- Pupils in the most deprived areas of the country are therefore **twenty times** more likely to be sent to a failing school.

The difference between local authorities is particularly stark when you examine the subjects which independent schools, and universities, particularly value.

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<sup>4</sup> Blanden, Gregg and Machin, Centre for Economic Performance, *Intergenerational Mobility in Europe and North America*, April 2005

<sup>5</sup> Hansard, 21 Apr 2008 : Column 1549W

- Last year five local authorities – including Islington, Darlington and Blackpool – did not have a single pupil from a maintained school attempt GCSE Physics.<sup>6</sup>
- Twelve local authorities had less than a quarter of their pupils even *attempt* English, Maths, Science and a Modern language at GCSE – including Hartlepool, Kingston upon Hull, Barking and Dagenham, Middlesbrough and Knowsley.<sup>7</sup>

Inequality is increasing – as recent GCSE results painfully remind us. In the last year, the attainment gap between the poorest areas and the wealthiest widened by 15 percentage points – from 28 per cent to 43 per cent.

- In 2006, pupils in the 10 per cent most deprived areas gained 29.2 per cent 5A\*-C including English and Maths. Pupils in the 10 per cent least deprived areas gained 57.6 per cent- an attainment gap of 28.4 percentage points.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2007, however, pupils in the 10 per cent most deprived areas fell back to 25.3 per cent gaining five good GCSEs including English and maths, while those in the 10 per cent least deprived areas pulled away, with 68.4 per cent gaining five good GCSEs including English and maths.<sup>9</sup> The gap between the poorest and the richest has therefore widened in the past year from 28.4 per cent to 43.1 per cent.

## Entrenching disadvantage – the effect of secondary school

The children who took Key Stage 2 exams in 2002 completed their GCSEs last year. In those five years the effect of social background has become more important, not less.

- In 2002, at Key Stage 2 (aged 11), the gap between 11 year-olds eligible for free school meals (FSM) and those who were not reaching the expected level was 26 points for English, 16 points for maths and 10 points for science.<sup>10</sup>
- In 2005, for the same pupils aged 14 this gap had grown to 27 points for English, 27 points for maths and 30 points for science.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families, GCSE attempts in selected subjects by pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in maintained schools by Local Authority 2006/7

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000702/SFR01-2007additionaltables.xls#Table 21!A1 Table 21>.

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000759/SFR38\\_2007\\_Additional\\_Tables.xls](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000759/SFR38_2007_Additional_Tables.xls)

<sup>10</sup> Hansard, 29 Jan 2008; Key Stage 2 results. The expected level, according to the Government, is level 4. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhsrd/cm080129/text/80129w0015.htm>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000671/index.shtml> Tables 83,84,85. Key stage 4 results. The expected level is level 5.

- And in 2007, by the time pupils came to take GCSEs 21.1 per cent of FSM pupils gained five good GCSEs including English and maths, compared to 49 per cent of non-FSM pupils - a gap of nearly 28 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

## The Early Years

### The attainment gap

We recognise that the attainment gap between rich and poor begins at an early age. Research by Leon Feinstein has shown that the gap in educational attainment between the top and bottom socio-economic groups at 22 months is already 13 percentage points.<sup>13</sup>

Feinstein has also shown that as children go through primary school, high early achievers from disadvantaged backgrounds are overtaken by poor early achievers from advantaged backgrounds.<sup>14</sup>

That is why it is vital that disadvantaged children are supported early. We are committed to continue with the Government's Sure Start programme, which we believe can help to target the most vulnerable and deprived. Yet for that reason, we are concerned that Sure Start has failed to reach out to those most in need:

- 71,000 fewer families from the most deprived backgrounds use formal childcare than they did in 2004, even though the Government promised to increase the number of families using formal childcare by 120,000 between 2004 and 2008.<sup>15</sup>
- Sure Start Local Programmes are only reaching 7 of 14 outcomes that the Government has set.<sup>16</sup>

### Growing inequality under Labour

Pupils are first assessed at the age of 5 during the 'Foundation Stage'. In 2004, the Government said it wanted to reduce inequalities between the children in the 30 per cent most disadvantaged areas and the rest of England from 16 per cent to 12 per cent.

Far from reducing inequality, in the next three years it widened – in 2007 it had increased from 16 to 17 per cent.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000759/index.shtml> Table 17.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2003/dec/08/2>

<sup>14</sup> Feinstein, L. (2003) 'Inequality in the Early Cognitive Development of British Children in the 1970 Cohort', *Economica* (70) 277, 73-97

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/aboutus/reports/pdfs/7493-DCSF-AnnualReport.pdf>, p.154

<sup>16</sup> Sure Start, "National Evaluation Summary: The impact of Sure Start Local Programmes on Three Year Olds and Their Families" (March 2008), p.4

The same story can be told at Key Stage 1, when children are 6 years old. The level of inequality is tragically high and growing. The performance of children from the most deprived areas is deteriorating:

- The number and proportion of 6 year-old children from the most deprived communities achieving the national standard in all Key Stage 1 assessments has fallen since 2005. Nearly 3,000 fewer 6 year olds from the most deprived communities achieve level 2 or above in mathematics today than they did in 2005.
- 75 per cent of children in the most disadvantaged areas achieved the national standard for reading in 2005; this dropped to 73 per cent in 2007.
- The number of 6-year olds from the most disadvantaged communities achieving the national standard in writing has dropped by 18 per cent since 1997.

Meanwhile, the gap in attainment between children in the most affluent areas and children in the most disadvantaged areas continues to widen:

- In 2002, 72 per cent of 6-year olds on free school meals attained the national standard in their key stage 1 writing assessment. In 2007, that had dropped to 63 per cent, the attainment gap in writing between the poorest and the rest increasing by 4 percentage points between 2002 and 2007.<sup>18</sup>

## Primary School

### The attainment gap

In 1997, the same year that the Labour Party came to power, the pupils who have just received their Key Stage 2 results were born. This year alone, almost a quarter of a million— 226,783 pupils - did not reach the Government's expected level in reading, writing and arithmetic. In total under Labour, **3,083,438** pupils did not gain the basics they need to progress and succeed at secondary school.

- In a massive 3,655 primary schools less than 50 per cent of pupils achieve Level 4 or higher in reading, writing and mathematics – over one in five primary schools.<sup>19</sup>
- 16 per cent of pupils either fall backwards or do not make the progress in maths that they were expected to achieve between the ages of 7 and 11.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/aboutus/reports/pdfs/7493-DCSF-AnnualReport.pdf>, p.152

<sup>18</sup> Hansard, 10 July 2008, c1815W; 30 June 2008, question 214396; 15 July 2008, question 217566.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhsrscm080402/text/80402w0019.htm#08040272001943>; Department for Children, Schools and Families, Schools and Pupils in England, September 2007

Additional analysis shows that In 3,400 primary schools more than 30 per cent of pupils do not reach the basic level in maths (2,600 for English); 567 primary schools get less than half of pupils reaching the basic level in maths (new research)

Again, those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds fare worst.

- Last year, over 60 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals did not gain the 3Rs at Key Stage 2.<sup>20</sup>

## Growing inequality under Labour

- The gap between free school meals pupils and their more affluent counterparts had risen to 21 points in English at Key Stage Two (age 11). Only 62 per cent of FSM pupils reached the expected level 4, compared with 83 per cent of non-FSM pupils.

Even this disparity hides the full truth – that many of those from poor backgrounds have more severe forms of reading failure than are captured by the government's target.

- 24 per cent of FSM pupils still have the reading age of a 9 year old (level 3), compared with 12 per cent non-FSM pupils
- 8 per cent FSM pupils are working below the level of the test, compared with 3 per cent non-FSM pupils.

And while the performance of FSM pupils achieving the 3Rs at Key Stage 2 has risen from 32 per cent to 38 per cent, the achievement of more affluent pupils has also risen overall.<sup>21</sup> The result is that the attainment gap between rich and poor has remained stubbornly constant at 21 per cent since 2002:

KS2					
(l4)	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
All pupils	53%	53%	56%	56%	59%
FSM					
Pupils	32%	32%	35%	35%	38%
<b>GAP</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>

In some subjects – maths and science at Key Stage 2, for instance – the gap has actually widened. In 2002, the gap in science was 10 percentage points; it now stands at 15. And the gap has widened to 20 percentage points in maths – up from 16 points in 2002.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> DCSF: National Curriculum Assessment, GCSE and Equivalent Attainment and Post-16 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England 2006/07

<sup>21</sup> Hansard, 19 February 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Hansard, 29 Jan 2008 : Column 252W

And since 2004, the gap between FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils has widened or remained the same in 37 local authorities, including some of the most deprived areas such as Hackney, Liverpool and Tower Hamlets.

## The disengaged

It is at primary school where FSM pupils who have become disengaged begin to fall further behind, either through poor behaviour or playing truant:

- 45 per cent of persistent truants at Primary School are FSM pupils.<sup>23</sup>
- Nearly seven times as many pupils are excluded in the 10 per cent most deprived primary schools, compared to the 10 per cent least deprived primary schools. There were 9,404 fixed period exclusions in schools in the 10 per cent most deprived areas of the country, compared to 1,447 in the 10 per cent most affluent.<sup>24</sup>

Free School Meals pupils are also a third less likely to be identified as gifted and talented, with the programme including just 5893 FSM pupils, compared with 60,180 non-FSM pupils.<sup>25</sup>

## Secondary school

### The attainment gap

At secondary school, the most disadvantaged pupils fall even further behind, as the gap between FSM pupils and their counter-parts increases to 27 percentage points.

- Just 37 per cent of FSM pupils aged 14 gained the accepted level – level 5 at key stage 3 – in the 3Rs.
- Over one fifth (21 per cent) of 14 year old FSM pupils have a reading age of 9 (level 3) or below.
- One fifth of 14 year old FSM pupils also had the reading age of an 11 year old. In total, over 4 in 10 of FSM pupils aged 14 have a reading below that of an 11 year old.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Hansard 21 Apr 2008 : Column 1586W

<sup>24</sup> DCSF: *Pupil Absence in Schools in England, including Pupil Characteristics: 2006/07*

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000731/Bweb01-2007.pdf> p.100

<sup>26</sup> DCSF: *National Curriculum Assessment, GCSE and Equivalent Attainment and Post-16 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England 2006/07*

Pupils that qualify for FSM are less likely to enter the most difficult papers at Key Stage 3 even if they have done just as well as non-FSM pupils at key stage 2. For FSM pupils gaining 33 marks in their Key Stage Two tests, just 50 per cent will be entered for the higher tier. 68 per cent of non-FSM pupils who got 33 marks at Key Stage 2 will enter for the higher tier.<sup>27</sup>

## The disengaged

The most disadvantaged pupils are also more likely to be excluded from school:

- 30 per cent of all fixed period exclusions involve FSM pupils.<sup>28</sup>
- 14 per cent of pupils in the 10 per cent most deprived secondary schools are being suspended from school compared to 8 per cent in the least deprived schools.<sup>29</sup>
- The rate of fixed period exclusions for violence against an adult is ten times higher in the 10 per cent most deprived areas compared with the least 10 per cent deprived. The number of fixed period exclusions for violence against a pupil rose was 210 in the least deprived areas, compared to 7,250 in the most deprived areas.<sup>30</sup>

FSM pupils are also far more likely to stay away from school, with 17,080 pupils—a quarter of all FSM pupils taking GCSEs—becoming persistent truants in their GCSE year at school, compared to 11 per cent of all pupils.<sup>31</sup>

## Labour's certificate of secondary education – the wasted generation

Pupils taking their GCSEs this year were four when Labour came to power. Despite the government's promise to focus upon 'education, education, education', millions of pupils have left school with little to show for their education, during a decade of persistent failure:

- In total since 1997, 300,003 pupils have not been entered for a single GCSE
- A further 383,739 pupils did not achieve a single GCSE above a G grade
- 1,750,743 pupils did not gain a single C grade at GCSE

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000731/Bweb01-2007.pdf> p.73.

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000793/SFR14\\_2008TablesAdditional24July.xls](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000793/SFR14_2008TablesAdditional24July.xls) Table 18

<sup>29</sup> DCSF: Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions from Schools in England 2006/07

<sup>30</sup> Hansard 26 March 2007; Col.1296W.

<sup>31</sup> Hansard 21 Apr 2008 : Column 1586W

- 1,136,907 pupils did not get above a G grade at GCSE Maths or were not even entered for this compulsory subject (455,907)
- 1,131,434 pupils did not get above a G grade at GCSE English or were not even entered for this compulsory subject (520,739)
- 3,485,686 pupils did not get a grade C or above at Maths, and 3,040,876 did not gain a grade C or above in English GCSE<sup>32</sup>

Last year alone, 136,861 pupils did not attain any GCSE grades higher than a D in 2006/07— 24 per cent of all pupils.

- 71,583 pupils achieved just three GCSE grades or less at a D grade or below in 2007
- 28,114 of these gained no GCSEs whatsoever.<sup>33</sup>
- 33,600 pupils were not even entered for English and maths GCSE (only 603,800 out of total 637,400 entrants). 60,700 pupils were not entered for English, maths and science GCSE (576,700 out of total 637,400 pupils)

More pupils than ever before are not achieving five GCSEs of any grade, more than in 1997. In 2007, for the first time, over 100,000 pupils - 100,510 - did not obtain this measure, up from 82,278 in 2006, and 77,628 in 2005. In 1997, there were 98,171 pupils not reaching five GCSEs of any grade.<sup>34</sup>

Once again, it is the most disadvantaged pupils who are the victims of educational failure:

- 21.1 per cent obtained five good GCSEs, including English and maths, compared to 49.1 per cent of non-FSM pupils.<sup>35</sup>
- Shockingly, 33,909 pupils eligible to receive free school meals did not attain any GCSE grades higher than a D in 2006/07 – 47 per cent of all FSM pupils.
- 9,603 FSM pupils (12 per cent) sat fewer than 5 GCSEs.<sup>36</sup>
- 20 per cent weren't entered for English, maths and science GCSE.<sup>37</sup>
- Only 26 per cent attempted English, maths, science and a foreign language, with only 8 per cent gaining a C grade or above in these subjects.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Michael Gove PQ 219572-219577; Hansard 21 July 2008

<sup>33</sup> Hansard, 17 Sep 2007 : Column 2202W

<sup>34</sup> Information obtained from Michael Gove PQ; Hansard 21 July Column 936W:  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhsrd/cm080721/text/80721w0049.htm#08072233002474>

<sup>35</sup> DCSF: *National Curriculum Assessment, GCSE and Equivalent Attainment and Post-16 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England 2006/07*

<sup>36</sup> Hansard 21 Apr 2008 : Column 1550W

<sup>37</sup> Hansard PQ 187164; 25 February 2008

<sup>38</sup> Hansard 3 Mar 2008 : Column 2154W

## A-levels and beyond

### A-levels

- Only 25 per cent of pupils whose parents are in a ‘routine’ job will be in full time education by the time they are 19, compared with 61 per cent of those born to high professional workers.
  - Of these, only 33 per cent of pupils whose parents are in a routine job will gain a level 3 qualification (A-level or equivalent) by 19, compared with 72 per cent of those whose parents are high professional workers.
- Instead, 38 per cent of children born to parents who have a routine job will still not have the equivalent of a single good GCSE by the time they are 19, compared with 12 per cent of children of higher professional worker.<sup>39</sup>

The Government’s attempts to improve the levels of post-16 education among the poorest has failed.

- Just 5,096 FSM pupils went on to post-16 learning, out of a total of 79,358 FSM pupils who sat GCSEs two years earlier. Since 2005, there are 200 fewer FSM pupils staying on to take A levels.<sup>40</sup>
- **This means that only 1 in 16 FSM pupils stayed on at school after 16.**

Of those who do stay on, only a tiny number achieve the grades which would allow them to attend the top-performing Universities.

Of those pupils taking A levels, only 176 FSM pupils gained three A grades— 0.2 per cent of all FSM pupils who sat GCSEs in 2005, compared to 12 per cent of other pupils taking A levels.<sup>41</sup> **This means that FSM pupils are 193 times more likely to not obtain any GCSE grade higher than a D than obtain 3 As at A level.**

### University

Access to University remains stubbornly low – despite the £1.23 billion spent on widening participation since 2004<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000760/sfr39-2007tablesfinal.xls> Tables A, C.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Gove PQ 182582; Hansard 3 March 2008; *National Curriculum Assessment, GCSE and Equivalent Attainment and Post-16 Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England 2005*

<sup>41</sup> Hansard PQ 185780; 18 February 2008

<sup>42</sup> Hansard PQ 172276

- Between 2004 and 2007 the number of people from lower socio-economic groups accepted to study for degrees has only increased by 6,500 – 1.8 per cent.<sup>43</sup>

The results are even starker for the top-performing Universities.

- The ten Universities which have the lowest percentage of students from low socio-economic groups are all in the good University guide top 20 – and six are in the top 10.<sup>44</sup>
- ‘100 elite schools – making up under 3 per cent of 3,700 schools with sixth forms and sixth form colleges in the UK – accounted for a third of admissions to Oxbridge during the last five years.’<sup>45</sup>
- The state system educates 93 per cent of children. But
  - 53 per cent of Oxford students are state educated
  - 58 per cent of Cambridge students are state educated<sup>46</sup>

And, as with schools, there are pockets of low access. The pupils originating from neighbourhoods of low participation are particularly unlikely to go to the top-performing Universities.

- The percentage of pupils from low participation neighbourhoods going to UK Universities is 9.4 per cent. But all five of the top Universities have less than half that percentage from low participation neighbourhoods.<sup>47</sup>

Yet the government does not always focus money where it is most needed. The new grants system announced by the government will provide £165m of new funding in maintenance grants, but:

- **90 per cent goes to the top socioeconomic groups.** The vast majority of the grants - £150m - will go to students in families in socio-economic groups 1 to 3. Students from socio-economic groups 4 to 7 gain only £15m.
- **The most fortunate get three times as much as the bottom three socioeconomic groups combined.** The top socio-economic group (class 1) will gain three times as much from the changes (£45m) as the bottom three groups put together.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> UCAS *Degree Acceptances by socio-economic group* 2007; 2004. Because the number of unclassified acceptances have increased, the percentages are of those known. It is possible that the increase is less or greater than that given because people from any background have not been assigned to a socio-economic group.

<sup>44</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency, Participation of under-represented groups in higher education: Young full-time undergraduate entrants 2006/07; Times Good Universities Guide 2009. One of the Higher Education Institutions with the lowest percentage of students from low socio-economic groups does not appear in the Good Universities Guide – Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance.

<sup>45</sup> Sutton Trust, *University admissions by Individual Schools*, February 2008

<sup>46</sup> Higher Education Statistics Agency annual release, 2008

<sup>47</sup> HESA, Participation of under-represented groups in higher education: Young full-time undergraduate entrants 2006/07

<sup>48</sup> Conservative party analysis

## Does it matter?

There are many different measures of the effects of qualifications – however, studies agree that getting the right skills and certificates makes an enormous difference to an individual's life-time earnings. This creates a vicious circle – the poorest are more likely to fail at school so they will earn less, and their children are in turn more likely to be trapped in poverty.

### Getting it right early

- Individuals with level 1 numeracy skills earn 15-19 per cent more than those with skills below this level.<sup>49</sup>
- The best predictor of how skilled an adult will be is their skill level in primary school.<sup>50</sup>

### The importance of a degree

- The life-time earnings of a non-graduate will be around £600,000 **less** than that of a graduate.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The Centre for the Economics of Education, Measuring and assessing the impact of basic skills on Labour Market Outcomes, November 2000).

<sup>50</sup> Coulond, Marcenaro-Guierrez, Vignoles, May 2007

<sup>51</sup> Dearden, Fitzsimons, Goodman and Kaplan, February 2008