

A photograph of four young Black children gathered around a table, looking at several colorful books. The child on the far left, a boy in a red long-sleeved shirt, is pointing at a book. The other three children, two girls and one boy, are looking at the books with interest. The books on the table have various covers, including one with a portrait of a person and another with the text 'CAPS FOR SALE'.

National Literacy Trust

Who we are

- **We are a charity** – established 17 years ago
- **We campaign** to improve public understanding of the vital importance and impact of literacy.
- **We investigate and innovate**, conducting research to improve and measure the effectiveness of services and support for people who need help with literacy.
- **We work in partnership**, bringing together key organisations to lead literacy promotion in the UK, and we share our knowledge as widely as possible.
- We support those trying to improve their literacy through **projects, networks and communities** across the UK and we deliver projects and programmes ourselves.



We believe

- Society will only be fair when everyone has the literacy skills they need to succeed in life
- Literacy is a combination of communication skills
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Speaking
 - Listening





Low literacy: a factor in deprivation

- **95% of all employment in the UK requires employees to be able to read**
- **41% of employers are concerned about their employees' basic literacy skills**
- **50% of all offenders leaving prison are unable to read**
- **Men and women with the poorest literacy or numeracy skills were the least likely to have voted in the 1987 and 1997 general election**
- **1 in 6 adults struggle with basic literacy**

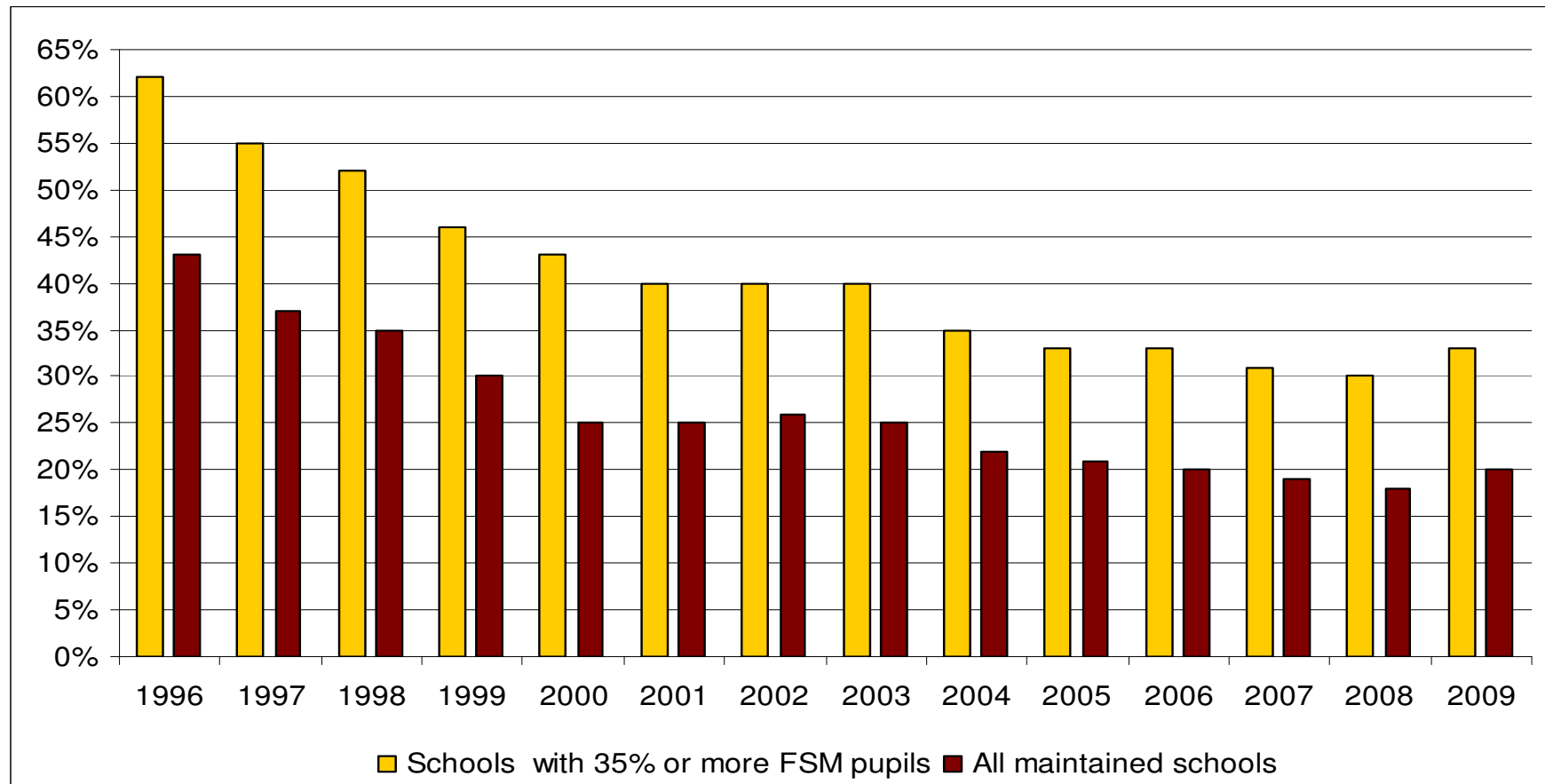


POOR SELF-ESTEEM

UNDER ACHIEVEMENT

WORKLESSNESS

Improvements have stagnated and have not narrowed the gap in attainment



Proportion of pupils not reaching level 4 at key stage 2

International comparisons

The “long tail” of underachievement

Relative to other countries surveyed annually as part of the Progress in International Reading Literacy study, England has larger than average proportions of pupils achieving both above average and below average in literacy.



The solution?

- Aspiration: addressing the link between attitudes, behaviours and skills
 - Ensuring services support home learning and are relevant to people's lives and aspirations
- Low literacy is often inter-generational and widespread in disadvantaged communities
 - Literacy support must be embedded across services and communities

Our work with local areas

- We have worked with local authorities for over 12 years – helping to improve practice with our projects and research
- In 1998 and 2008 we ran a National Year of Reading involving every upper tier authority in promoting reading
- We share innovative local practice via publications and events
- In 2009-11 we have worked with 21 local authorities to improve literacy through a multi-agency and coordinated approach to literacy
- From 2011 onwards we will be working in partnership with local areas to share and the embed lessons learned



Lessons from our work with local authorities

- Low literacy is widespread and services of all kinds encounter it and bear the cost of it
- Literacy provision is fragmented and hard to navigate for professionals and the general public
- Low literacy is rarely considered as part of “big issues” such as regeneration, resilient communities, child poverty and early intervention but is often part of the problem



And some opportunities

- Partners from across the community want to deal with low literacy – there are many opportunities to address literacy issues
- Good practice exists and can be shared and targeted
- There is huge potential to improve life chances by bringing existing resources to bear on low literacy
 - Frontline practice
 - Strategy and planning
 - Senior support
- Communities “get” literacy – they often want to be part of the solution



What is needed?

Our work with local areas shows that literacy levels can be improved if:

- A local area prioritises literacy and senior officers and leaders get behind it
- If provision is “joined up” enabling good practice to be shared, facilitating signposting and ensuring family engagement is a priority
- A wider range of partners are engaged, focusing on partners who are trusted by the most vulnerable families and communities



Some examples

- Wiltshire – working with housing associations to promote family literacy in poorest districts
- Coventry – working with Child Protection Volunteers to embed literacy support in their work with vulnerable families
- Sheffield – corporate literacy strategy facilitating links across partners such as fostering and early years
- Knowsley – focusing on teenage parents and embedding literacy within their existing support package



“John” had a long history of mental health issues and many life complications including unemployment and drug and alcohol problems.

Accessing literacy support through his Employment Support Worker enabled John to add to his CV and build the confidence to return to work. In turn this has enabled him to live in permanent and stable conditions and he feels his life has turned around.

When John describes how his life changed, developing and having the confidence to use literacy skills are a massive feature.



“Sam” had her baby when she was 17. She often felt isolated and found life hard.

The teenage pregnancy team encouraged her to attend a group for young mums at the local children’s centre.

Sam learnt stories and songs. She gained awareness of, and confidence in helping, her child’s development. She enjoyed making a story sack and later attended six weekly communication, language and literacy sessions with her daughter.

Sam was enthusiastic about what she learned and contacted her friends and family telling them to turn off the TV and talk to their babies and young children.



Our support for local areas

- We can work in partnership with you to plan your local approach and evaluation framework:
 - Identifying need and priority audiences
 - Examining research and approaches from other authorities
 - Auditing, joining up and adding value to existing provision
 - Targeting support to at risk families and communities

The National Literacy Trust operates a day rate for this support.

- Free online resources and case studies via the Local Partnerships Zone on our website
- “Working with the National Literacy Trust” logo for partners who work with us to create a community-wide literacy strategy and can demonstrate the impact of their approach.



For more information

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www.literacytrust.org.uk

