

LSE Centre for Economic Performance: Evaluating Education Policies: The Evidence from Economic Research

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A new series of [Election Analyses](#) is now available from the LSE's Centre for Economic Performance (CEP). The series will discuss the research evidence on some of the key policy battlegrounds of the 2010 General Election, including macroeconomic policy, immigration, health, education, crime, poverty and inequality, labour market policy, regional policy, energy and the environment, financial regulation and bankers' bonuses, and foreign aid. The latest CEP Election Analysis gives an overview of the research evidence on education policy, one of the key battlegrounds of the 2010 General Election.

The publication, by [Sandra McNally](#), is summarised below and can be found in full on the [CEP Election Analysis Site](#).

- Educational expenditure in the UK has increased enormously – but it is still only just above the OECD average. In 1997/98, expenditure on education and training as a percentage of GDP was 4.9 per cent (the same level as in 1987/88) whereas in 2006, it was 5.9 per cent of GDP. There is robust evidence that the increase in school expenditure between 2002 and 2007 led to a modest increase in educational attainment.
- Exam performance has improved over time for secondary schools. But the improvement in primary schools since 2000 has been more muted. Exam performance has improved at a faster rate for poorer pupils, although the gap between rich and poor pupils is still substantial.
- A 'pupil premium' that would follow disadvantaged pupils would help to correct inequities in how funding gets allocated to schools. Research evidence suggests that economically disadvantaged pupils benefit disproportionately from rises in general school expenditure.
- Early evidence on the effects of the academies programme suggests that the growth in educational attainment for pupils attending academies is no different than for pupils attending other similar schools. Evidence for Sweden does not suggest that the application of a similar system in the UK would raise overall educational attainment.
- Increasing the entry-level qualifications for teachers is a difficult challenge in view of the high labour market returns available to graduates and the continuing need for more teachers to replace those who leave the profession. Research evidence suggests that 'teacher quality' is important for their pupils' results, but it does not suggest that there is a relationship between 'teacher quality' and teachers' own educational credentials.



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