The Seventh Whitehall Lecture

The Role of Academies in English Education Policy

Professor Becky Francis,
Director of the Institute of Education,
University College London

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Cambridge University
Land Society

Contents

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The Cambridge University Land Society launched this important series of lectures in recognition of the part its members play in contributing to public policy issues. Society members are mainly alumni of the Department of Land Economy, but also from many other academic disciplines in the University of Cambridge. Many play important and often distinguished roles in many aspects of public policy that are covered by the work of the Department.

The Whitehall Group is a forum of CULS and is a high level influential policy discussion group of well-connected Cambridge alumni, who are mainly members of CULS. In addition to its member events it also runs this distinguished series of policy lectures. The lectures will discuss major aspects of public policy that in one way or another touch on the disciplines of policy, economics and the application of land use.

Previous lectures in this highly regarded series have been:

1. Professor Sir Malcolm Grant, CBE, Chairman NHS England – 'The Extraordinary Challenges of Future Healthcare and the Estates Implications for the NHS' – Inaugural lecture given at the Royal Institution (March 2014)
2. Lord Deighton, KBE, Commercial Secretary, HM Treasury – 'Infrastructure in the 21st Century: from the Olympics to High Speed Rail and beyond' (January 2015)
3. Dame Kate Barker, CBE, Senior Visiting Fellow, Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge – 'How will we house our children? – The Future of UK Housing Policy' (April 2015)
4. Professor Chris Ham CBE, Chief Executive, The King's Fund – 'What needs to be done to secure the future of the NHS' (December 2015)
5. The Rt. Hon. The Lord Willetts, Chairman, The Resolution Foundation 'UK Science and Innovation Policy – Three Barriers to applying research better'.

These lectures are published as an occasional series and copies are available by emailing fionajones.wg@culandsoc.com.

Welcome from the Vice Chancellor of the University of Cambridge

The Cambridge University Land Society is an exemplary society at Cambridge – for its longevity and for its level of engagement with a wide range of sectors and contemporary issues.

Over the last 50 years, the Society has built a membership base of nearly 1,000 alumni, spanning those who graduated from Cambridge in the 1950s who now hold senior positions in their fields to current students and recent graduates of the Department of Land Economy.

The number of disciplines and interests represented in the Society's membership – as well as the broad range of issues discussed at business and social events held by the Society each year – highlight what Cambridge does so well. We recognise that the challenges we face today are increasingly complex, multi-faceted and global in nature, and that they cannot be overcome with the expertise of just one area. This is why it is so valuable that the Land Society continues to bring together fresh and diverse perspectives from those studying and working in economics, land, planning, governance, finance, environmental resources and beyond on critical public and private issues. The Whitehall Lecture series represents a great opportunity to take this debate forward – and to build the Land Society's critical mass of expertise – and I wish it every success.

Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge.

Whitehall Lecture Series, Douglas Blausten, Past Chairman, Whitehall Group

Douglas Blausten is a Consultant to Carter Jonas Chartered Surveyors and Property Consultants. He runs his own Corporate Real Estate Strategic Consultancy Company and is a Director of the Oakburn Properties Group with assets in the UK and Germany.

He was Vice Chairman of NHS Property Services and Chairman of its Asset and Investment Committee until November 2015 and a Trustee of the Mental Health Foundation for 7 years until 2017. He has been a Centre Fellow of the Cambridge Centre for Climate Change Mitigation Research and is a member of the Cambridge Land Economy Advisory Board.

He has held a number of executive and non-executive directorships in public and private companies. Douglas is a Past President of the Cambridge University Land Society and Past Chairman of the Whitehall Group

The Whitehall Lecturer
Professor Becky Francis

Director of the Institute of Education, University College London

Professor Francis has held the position of Director of UCL Institute of Education since July 2017. She is a leading academic with leadership experience in the private and third education sectors as well as in academia. Her research has focused on social identities and educational inequalities. She has recently combined education policy work with her academic career. In 2015 she was appointed Standing Advisor to the Education Select Committee and provides a wide range of consultancy to Government and other stakeholder organisations.

Professor Francis's policy research and analysis includes her recent influential work on 'Satisfactory' schools and on Academies. Her academic publications center on social identities (gender, 'race' and social class) in educational contexts, social identity and educational achievement, and feminist theory. Prior to joining King's College London in 2012, Professor Francis was Director of the Pearson Think Tank, Pearson Plc and Director of Education, The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (The RSA).

Introduction to 'The Role of Academies in English Education Policy'

This important lecture, the seventh in the Whitehall Series, is the culmination of a number of policy discussion sessions we have held over a 3 year period on education issues in the UK. Contributions have been led by Professors David Runciman (Cambridge), Dominic Wyse (UCL), Becky Francis (then Kings, London), AC Grayling (New College of the Humanities) and the Rt Hon David Laws and Rt Hon Lord Willetts. At these discussion sessions a wide range of education specialists have also contributed alongside our members. Professor Francis, now in her role as Director of the Institute of Education at UCL, looks at the major policy changes being brought about by the introduction of Academies throughout the Primary and Secondary Education sectors.

At the end of 2017, 35% of state funded schools in England were Academies. The Department for Education's current main intervention for underperforming maintained schools is to convert them to Academies and £ 81 million was spent on doing so in 2016-2017. Lord Adonis described their role as "a battering ram for high standards". Yet Academies have attracted huge attention and controversy in recent years with reports of poor performance, inconsistent standards and financial scandals.

In this Lecture Becky Francis charts the history of the Academies policy, the huge expansion since 2010 and where the policy now stands since the Government dropped the 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' White paper, which stipulated that full academisation of all state-funded schools must take place by 2022.

Professor Francis explains the findings of her paper for the Sutton Trust, Chain Effects, on the effectiveness of academies in relation to the original goals of the policy: to improve the life-chances of disadvantaged pupils. She explains the inconsistencies found on the impact of Academies on disadvantaged pupils and the huge variation in results between the best performing chains and the bottom fifth of chains that

show below average attainment and progress. That there are chains of Academies in which disadvantaged students attainment is significantly low and has not improved for three years, is an alarming fact that signals the need for urgent action. Professor Francis concludes that there has been progress, and cases of outstanding successes signalling what can be achieved. However, her research clearly identifies that this has not been the case across the board and that their potential has not yet been realised. She offers important policy recommendations based on these findings.

The Whitehall Lecture given by Professor Becky Francis, Director of the Institute of Education, University College London

Introduction

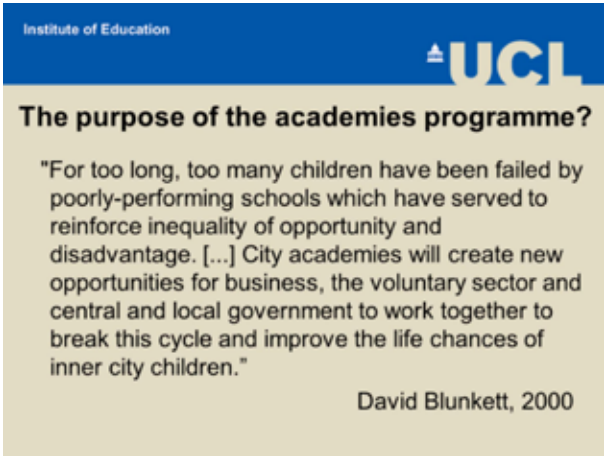
What are academies? The House of Commons Library defines them as 'state-funded, nonfee-paying schools in England, independent of local authorities. They operate in accordance with their funding agreements with the Secretary of State.' In two sentences this captures their distinctiveness and some of the issues that raises.

What is their purpose? According to David Blunkett, Secretary of State for education at the time the first academies were established, it is improving the life-chances of disadvantaged pupils.

It is good to revisit the purpose of academies, for two reasons. One, this topic remains a key issue for Equality of Opportunity and social justice in our system – there is an especially strong relationship between family wealth and educational outcomes in the UK case. And second is that, as you're all aware, since their inception in 2002, academies have taken many forms, and the academies policy programme has inserted and evolved various agenda. As I shall explain, the academies programme is now a multi-faceted beast, both in terms of its apparent intentions, and the different institutional forms it has developed.

We are told that the most successful companies ask why they are doing what they're doing. This is crucial, in all our activities. And certainly, any sensible policy programme builds in reflection and evaluation. This is one of the intentions of this speech.

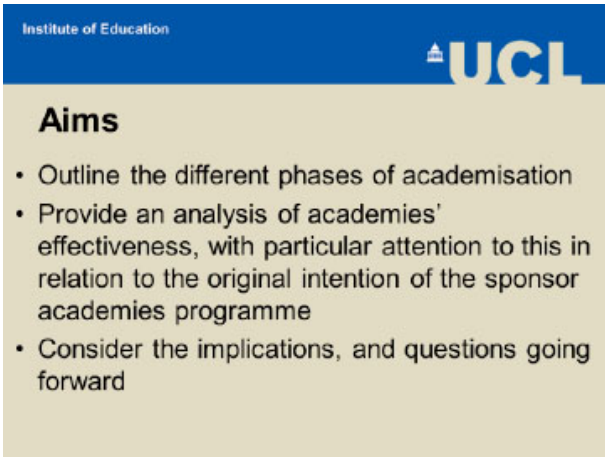
However, in relation to academies policy, there is a difficulty in distinguishing the purpose for evaluation – different phases/different types – with different purposes/agenda. This is our challenge! So it is timely to reflect on the nature of the academies programme, and its impact to date.



What I will do:

- Outline the different phases of academisation
- Provide an analysis of academies' effectiveness, with particular attention to this in relation to the original intention of the sponsor academies programme
- Consider the implications, and elucidate my key arguments, which are that:
  - Policymakers need to clarify and rearticulate the purpose of the academies programme.
  - And then we need to build systemically on what we have learnt over the period, and to address what we don't know, in order to improve the effectiveness of the programme going forward. (Of course I have many other points I want to make within this, but this is my key argument)..

Much of my analysis speaks to work I have done with others. Arriving as Director of Education at the RSA in 2010, the RSA had a longstanding individual academy that reflected the innovative aspirations of the initial policy. I was tasked to design and instigate a 'family of academies', and worked with Robert Hill to develop RSA Academies, a chain still thriving under the direction of Alison Critchley. My interest and experience of academies policy, including, for example,



participation in the infamous sponsor 'beauty parades' in seeking schools, drove the design of the Academies Commission, sponsored by the RSA, Pearson Think Tank, Cooperative Trust and CfBT, which I undertook with Commission Chair Christine Gilbert, Prof Chris Husbands and Brett Wigdortz. This was the first attempt to draw together learning and to analyse the impact of the academies programme. Still available online for those interested, it remains, I think, a mine of deep analysis and convincing, sensible recommendation. But also, it looked back to the past of sponsor academies, and forward to the new terrain of converters and Multi Academy Trusts – an illustration of the radically changing nature of the programme, and how quickly those changes were transpiring.

The expertise developed meant that I was appointed adviser to all three Education Select Committee inquiries into academies to date – firstly, the inquiry on Academies, under Committee Chair Graham Stuart; then the inquiry into Regional Schools Commissioners as part of my role as Standing Adviser to the Select Committee under Neil Carmichael. Standing down from that position as I took up the role of Director of the UCL Institute of Education, I remained as Special Adviser to support the recently published inquiry on Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs).

During that time, I was also commissioned by the Sutton Trust to work on their first exploration of the impact or otherwise of academy chains on the attainment of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. I did so in collaboration with my old friend and erstwhile supervisor of my PhD, Prof Merryn Hutchings (here tonight), along with Rob de Vries of the Sutton Trust. Then, as now, I am afraid Merryn has picked up most of the data analysis work, and I am enormously grateful to her. The impact of that report, Chain Effects?, was such that the Sutton Trust has commissioned us to maintain it every year since, and we are told it has become 'the bible' of reference for academy chains seeking to check their respective impact. I shall be quoting extensively from our 2016 report this evening; Chain Effects 2017 is shortly to be released, so watch this space.

A further thing to say at the outset is that although the academies programme has of course to some extent impacted on other UK nations in various ways, only England has adopted the academies programme, and hence the title should really refer to English education policy.

Different phases of academisation

I'm going to argue there have been five phases of academisation to date (with overlap, and in some cases continuity)

2002-2007: Resourced metamorphosis – City academies programme. Idea to replenish struggling schools in areas of social deprivation by bringing in philanthropic sponsors' money and business acumen, supported by government funding and new buildings, and innovative practices. In other words, a small 'bespoke' intervention, with substantial resource made available to those schools involved.

2007-2010: Chain reaction – Phase saw gradual growth in academy numbers over time, but increasing government recognition that not all academies were thriving. This led to the implementation of more rigorous funding agreements, and the encouragement of academy chains – with chains seen as best able to effectively direct groups of schools, deliver professionalism and VfM, and to share expertise between the schools within them.

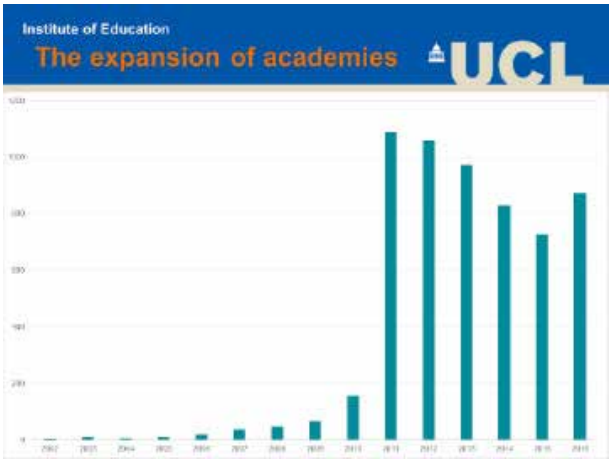
2010-2013: A hundred flowers/'The Wild West' – Coalition Government, and Michael Gove as Secretary of State. Whereas to date the academies programme focused on schools in need of turning around (a specific focus on social justice), Gove focused on the benefits of autonomy for all schools, and took a radical

diversion in both focus and scale. Policy now extended opportunity for successful schools – those rated Outstanding by Ofsted, and later those rated Good with some features noted as Outstanding – to opt out of LA control as 'independent state funded schools'; this was levered (accidentally or otherwise) with significant funding incentives for those schools choosing to convert.

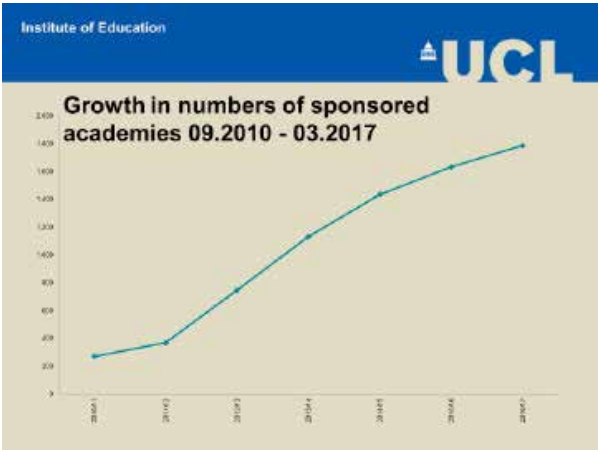
An aside on autonomy. Academies are afforded specific freedoms, including over the length of the school day, the nature of the curriculum, payment of staff, and so on. However, both the SSAT/Reform report of 2012, and the Academies Commission of 2013, found that the significant majority of converting schools were primarily motivated by the additional funding. Moreover, the innovative practices embraced by academies in the initial phase of academisation were found to have largely fallen away. There were two potential explanations: i) that our high accountability system, with the risks involved in a poor grade at Oftsed inspection, dampens the willingness to risk innovation, encouraging schools to play safe; ii) – and the explanation that I am rather more wedded to – that actually what is needed in schools is excellent pedagogy and subject expertise, and good leadership to ensure this is delivered. In other words, that innovation involving the specific freedoms afforded was rightly not the priority for schools. In any

case, there is a consensus that the impetus from the DfE at the time was as much to encourage 'freedom from', as 'freedom to' – to encourage schools to remove themselves from LA control. Instead of a middle tier, the new vision was for school collaboration to cascade expertise in a school-led system.

With regard to mass academisation and removal of schools from LA control, the policy certainly achieved its intention, and there was an explosion of academisation in 2010-11.



Sponsor academisation was also still being encouraged, increasingly via chains, and some chains were growing at a terrific rate.



Much of the DfE's resource became focused on brokering academisation, arguably with a prioritisation of quantity rather than quality. Sponsors were not subject to rigorous checks of effectiveness, or their achievements monitored before being handed further academies, and contradictory practices emerged as brokers looked for the simplest ways to secure sponsorship. Some of our most effective chains continued to grow gradually at this time, but others grew very rapidly and sometimes reaching into diverse geographical areas. The consequences were relatively quickly evident, as some of these chains performed poorly and have had some of their academies removed and re-brokered. The select committee has heard of the pressure they came under to take on more schools at the time.

These conditions, alongside other confusions and tensions caused by the sudden removal of large swathes of secondary schools from LA control, and conditions of scant regulation, led detractors at the time – and some academy CEOs too – to characterise the conditions of the period as akin to the Wild West. I have adopted

both the analogies of A Hundred Flowers and the Wild West – A Hundred Flowers captures the exciting productivity of unregulated autonomy, but those who know their history know Mao followed this liberality with a crack down a year later! The Wild West evokes the more chaotic and ruthless elements of the period, but also captures the adventure and new horizons being undertaken by secondary schools in this period, which I believe has had a lasting impact on school leaders' confidence and feelings of professional self-direction.

2014-2016: Mandated collaboration. However, the cracks were beginning to show. Analysis of academy performance was building over time, and results remained determinedly mixed. This included our first Chain Effects? report, which found that, although a few chains were achieving outstanding results for their disadvantaged pupils, many more were not attaining the transformative results promised by the academies programme, and some were performing poorly and not improving. Financial scandals began to frequent the press. In summer 2014, the DfE reversed its stance that a middle tier was unnecessary, and announced the creation of the role of Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), to oversee academies and lead the brokerage of more LA schools into MATs (for which they had targets). They have not had an easy task to make sense of this role, which many pointed out was somewhat contradictory. The scale of their task (with eight RSCs responsible for different regions of England), coupled with high levels of public scrutiny, may be one of the reasons that retention has been something of an issue. However, Sir David Carter has taken up his role as National Schools Commissioner with characteristic rigor, determination and dynamism, and the role and terrain continues to be shaped. He, in conjunction with his RSCs, has taken significant steps to inject rigor into the system of commissioning sponsorship, including his 'MAT Growth Check'.

Coupled with this new oversight was increased determination from the DfE under Secretary of State Nicky Morgan that a dual system was challenging for good governance, and that the MAT model was effective (note my reference to MATs – it was around this time that the government began to refer to all chains as MATs, in spite of the fact that many chains do not conform to MAT arrangements). Hence a strong message was sent to existing standalone academies that they were on borrowed time and that they must form or get into existing MATs, or risk being pushed. This culminated in the now infamous White Paper 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' in 2016, which stipulated all schools must

convert to academy status by 2022. It was envisaged that most would be part of MATs.

What is notable is that where the prior 'Hundred Flowers' period had encouraged betweenschool collaboration as a means for system improvement, this 'teaming up' was now being mandated by Government, pointing to the oxymoronic title I have chosen for this phase. Forced cooperation is not reflective of a schools-led vision, illustrating how once more the policy thinking had changed significantly, and again over a relatively short period.

In any case, as you all know, this element of the White Paper was not popular, including with Conservative back-benchers, and the change of Secretary of State following the Referendum provided an opportunity for a further change of direction, during which the White Paper was quietly dropped. And we still await a new one!

2017: An open chapter. We saw a Green Paper earlier this year, albeit in all likelihood this will now change again. Those of us who oppose a tripartite system will certainly welcome that change. In the meantime, Justine Greening has shown herself a very different Secretary of State, with a notable focus on teachers and issues, rather than structures. Full academisation has diminished as an agenda. This absence of new regulation or mandate is presented as an intentional period of calm and stability, and many will welcome this.

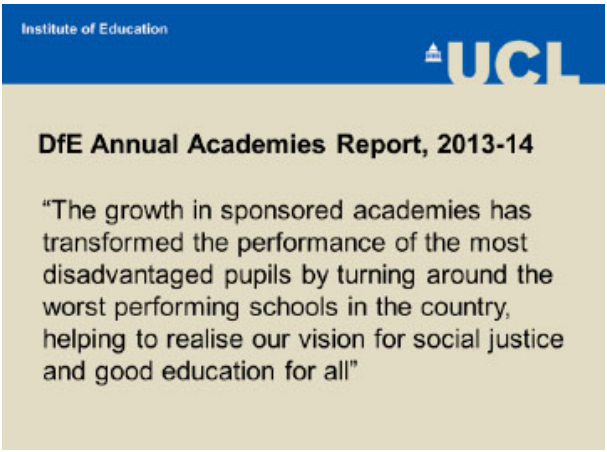
However, this leaves many issues unresolved – not least the ongoing promulgation of a dual system (LAs and RSCs).

So this brings us up to date. Obviously I have not even touched on the additional complexity of free schools, UTCs and studio schools, which are new schools but sit within the academies agenda.

Over the period – indeed, since their inception – academies have provoked attention and debate, and some hyperbole on both sides. After the Academies commission I conducted a discourse analysis of the responses to it (published in the Australian journal Discourse: Cultural Practices in Education), and as well as the discourses of autonomy and social justice I've referred to, the responses were also frequently infused with a narrative of 'system crisis' – either applied to argue that the system was in crisis so needed academies; or that academisation was causing a crisis in the system. Looking back, there was lots of optimism/

naivety at the start of the programme, including that new buildings are the answer, or that business leaders and their skills will necessarily be able to turn around a school. However, the fears of those opposed to academies that these would herald privatisation of the system and the inception of for-profit schooling has also proved unfounded.

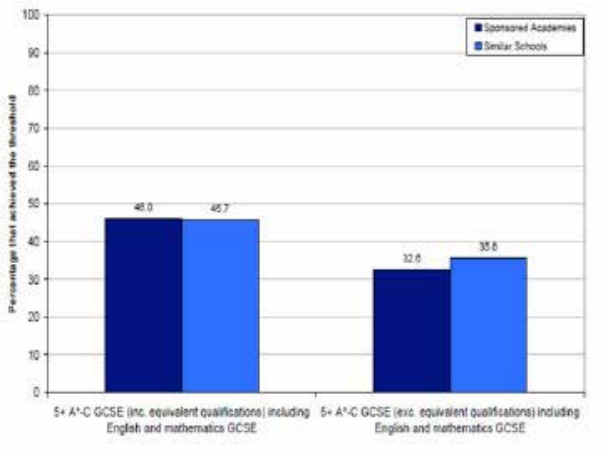
But, did they do what they were expected to do? I have illustrated how the different phases of academisation reflected quite distinct government agenda. In this sense, we could say that the independent state-funded schools have been something of a tabula rasa on which many policy visionary inflections have been projected. But two things. Firstly, they have always been posited as a mechanism for system improvement. And within this, a continuous thread of commitment can be traced through from the first phase to the present – that of narrowing socio-economic gaps for attainment and supporting social mobility by raising the achievement of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.



So to this end we must look at the achievement of academies and MATs compared to mainstream schools, and specifically at the outcomes for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Impact and Effectiveness

The impact of the first sponsor academies was, and still is, being tracked by Steve Machin at the LSE. Generally, the analysis has presented a mixed picture, with a small positive effect over time. However, it also depends how the success or otherwise is measured. We can see from DfE figures on academies' attainment against similar mainstream schools in 2012 that attainment is broadly similar, but that when 'equivalent qualifications' are removed, similar non-academies slightly outperformed them.



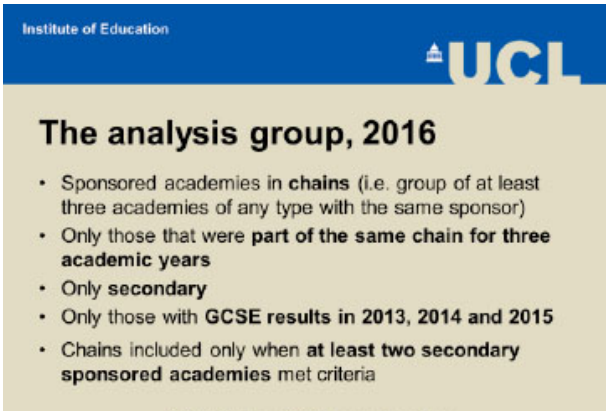
Nevertheless, we can also say that of these early phase academies, many schools were successfully turned around, and some of these went on to build the MATs and federations that we see today – including some of the most outstanding examples.

Looking at our Chain Effects analysis – we address these research questions: What impact have sponsored academies had on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils?

Which academy chains have been most (and least) successful in this regard?

In terms of our methods of analysis:

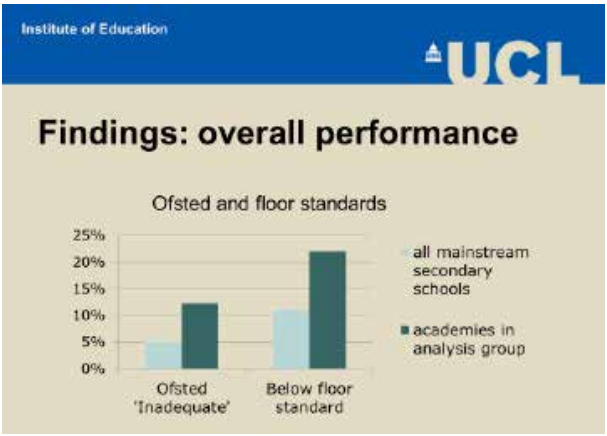
- Sponsored academies in chains (i.e. group of at least three academies of any type with the same sponsor)
- Only those that were part of the same chain for three academic years
- Only secondary
- Only those with GCSE results in 2013, 2014 and 2015
- Chains included only when at least two secondary sponsored academies met criteria
- 39 chains, 187 academies.



Note our focus at this stage on secondary schools; Chain Effects 2017 will for the first time include analysis of primaries. And there will be 48 chains in the sample this year.

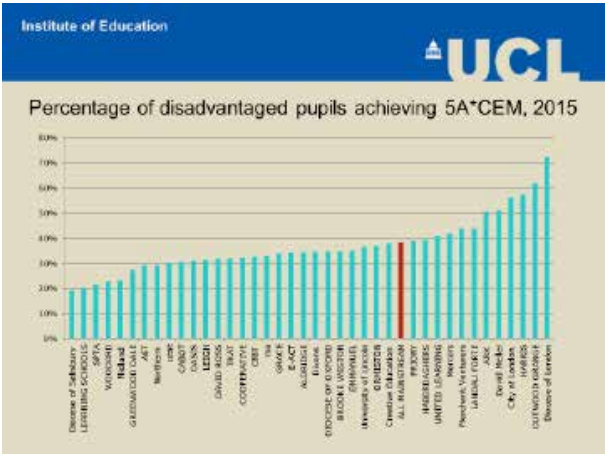
Our first Chain Effects? Analysis in 2014 showed that attainment for chains in addressing their mission of improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils was strikingly mixed: a handful of chains were performing well beyond the mean across a whole host of performance indicators; the majority were performing around the mainstream average or slightly below, and a further handful – albeit rather more sizable than the high performers – were performing significantly below the mainstream average. What was notable was that by and large, those chains succeeding with their disadvantaged pupils tended to be achieving good results for their more affluent pupils too.

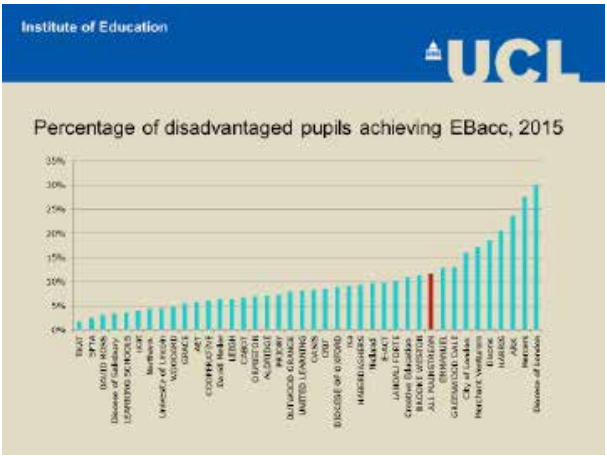
This sketch of results has changed little in the intervening years, albeit there have been several developments and changes in the ways in which success is measured, and we have sought to address all these in our reports. So we cut the data in a range of different ways.



Of course, schools that become sponsored academies are particularly challenging – but we have included only those that had been part of the same chain for at least three years (hence one might have hoped for greater improvement). It is notable that there is strong variation between chains here as elsewhere – in nine chains all the academies in our analysis group were Good or Outstanding, whereas in four, all were Inadequate or Requires Improvement.

This variation between chains is evident in every aspect of our analysis – for example, the percentage of disadvantaged pupils in each chain achieving 5A*CEM, which shows a range from less than 20% to more than 70% of disadvantaged pupils achieving this benchmark and percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving the EBacc, showing a range of 2% to over 30% achieving this benchmark.

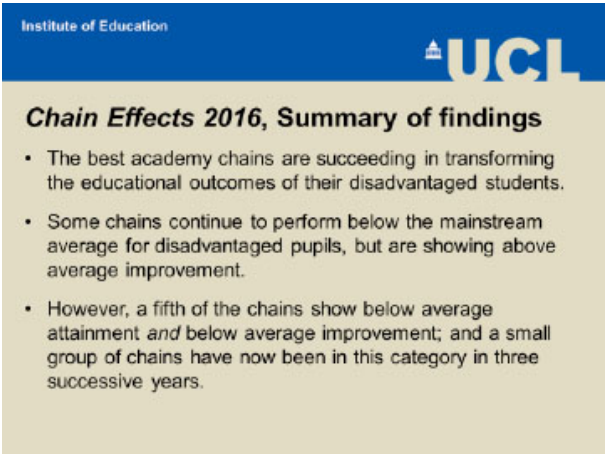




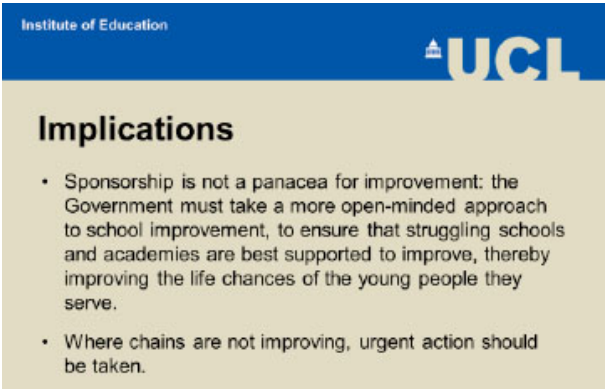
Chains are adopting different strategies, but for the most part those attaining well on some measures did so across the board.

Worryingly, we found that the proportion of chains performing above the mainstream average for disadvantaged pupils' performance has fallen over the period of analysis. For example, the percentage of chains above the mainstream average for 5A*CEM has fallen from 48% in 2013 to 36% in 2014 and only 31% in 2015. Similarly, the number of chains below average for maths and English progress has increased. And comparing improvement in the analysis group with schools that had similar attainment in 2013 nationally, we see that less than half the chains showed equal or better improvement. Hence, we do not have evidence of chains overall achieving the faster improvement anticipated by the government.

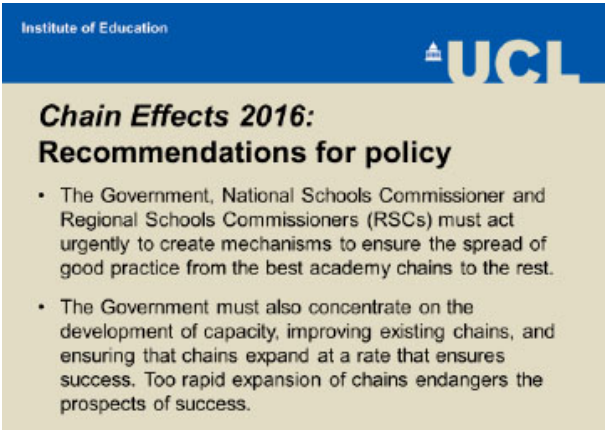
Relatedly, while a few chains had progressed from lower starting points into the more successful quadrant in our analysis, most had remained in their initial categories, and indeed we found evidence of a pulling away by those chains at the top of our league table. These chains – the CEOs of some of which are here in this audience – have achieved outstanding results for their (overwhelmingly) disadvantaged cohorts, and are demonstrating genuinely transformative outcomes. They prove what is possible. One of our consistent messages has been that we need to better distil and learn from these chains, in order to spread this excellence around the system.

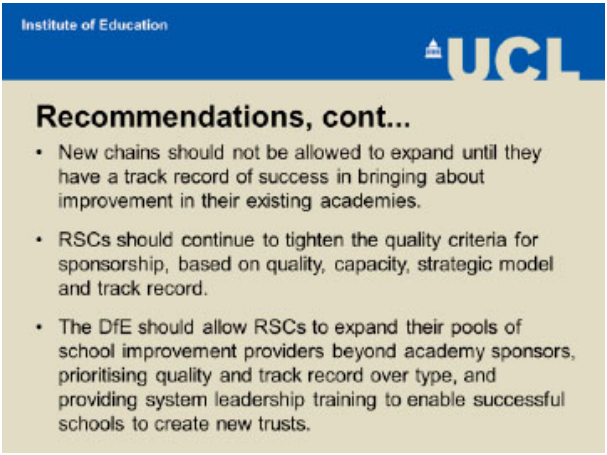


However, our analysis shows the urgency of action, for the sake of the disadvantaged young people concerned. To be clear, to find cases of chains where attainment for disadvantaged young people is significantly low and has not improved in three years, within an intervention specifically designed to improve the prospects of this group of young people, is alarming.



RSCs do now seem to be taking steps to address these problems, and we hope that our analysis can support the urgency of such interventions. We have made many recommendations for policy and practice, the most recent of which were focused on securing better accountability, rigour, and transparency in the system.





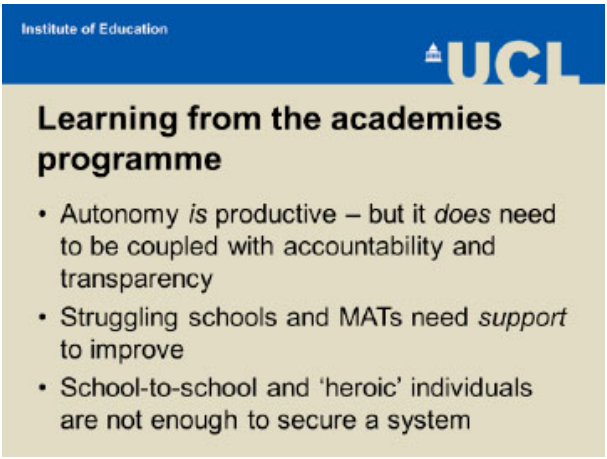
Discussion

So, to summarise. I have highlighted the different phases of development of the 15 years of the academies programme, characterising five discrete phases, all of which have had distinct foci, and sometimes reflect different visions and agenda. I have argued that nevertheless the intentions of system improvement, and especially improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged young people, have been maintained as consistent themes. I have also used our Chain Effects analysis to show that although some chains and schools are achieving incredible things for their pupils, this is not the case across the board.

Looking back at the progress over 15 years, much has happened organically, and progress has been made in various ways. The system has certainly not collapsed, as some foretold. And at least in Ofsted terms, across the board, our schools continue to improve. Few could argue that academisation has not energised the system; and the outstanding successes are testament to what can be achieved. BUT. It is important to be honest and recognise that this has not been the case across the board. Looking at results produced by the DfE as well as by the Education Policy Institute and Sutton Trust, academies cannot overall be viewed as fulfilling their role as the "battering ram for high standards" envisaged by Lord Adonis.

Academies have potential, but that potential has not yet been realised. We have learnt a lot, but not enough.

- Autonomy is productive – but it does need to be coupled with accountability and transparency
- Struggling schools and MATs need support to improve
- School-to-school and 'heroic' individuals are not enough to secure a system (longterm, our strange mixed economy of LAs, chains and standalones is going to be challenging to maintain).



And while the quantitative research I've alluded to sheds some light on sponsored academies in chains there is still a lot we don't know – e.g.

- What is it that the most effective chains are doing to achieve their outstanding outcomes (they are quite different from one another in size, model and approach)?
- The push for MATs was partly to encourage school-to school collaboration – but do the standalone secondary converters work with other schools?
- And what will be the outcomes for re-brokered academies – is this the most effective way of bringing about improvement for pupils and communities or is it simply a way of shifting the problem into other hands?

Perhaps now is an opportune time to take stock of the programme, to unpick the different agenda that have been projected on to academies policy to reappraise

and re-state purpose. I have been enormously impressed by the way in which two CEOs of MATs among the most successful in securing the transformative promise of academisation have taken a stand against the grammars agenda. Their leadership exemplifies how educationalists with credibility from their own achievements can shape the educational agenda; and we have a chance to do so now, in relation to the future of the academies programme, and promoting the life-chances of the young people it was designed to support. I hope that this speech marks the beginning of that conversation.

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