

# Do national strategies really work?

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*2 December 2011*

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# Case Study - secondary strategy, 2001-2010, England

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## The National Strategies

### Aims

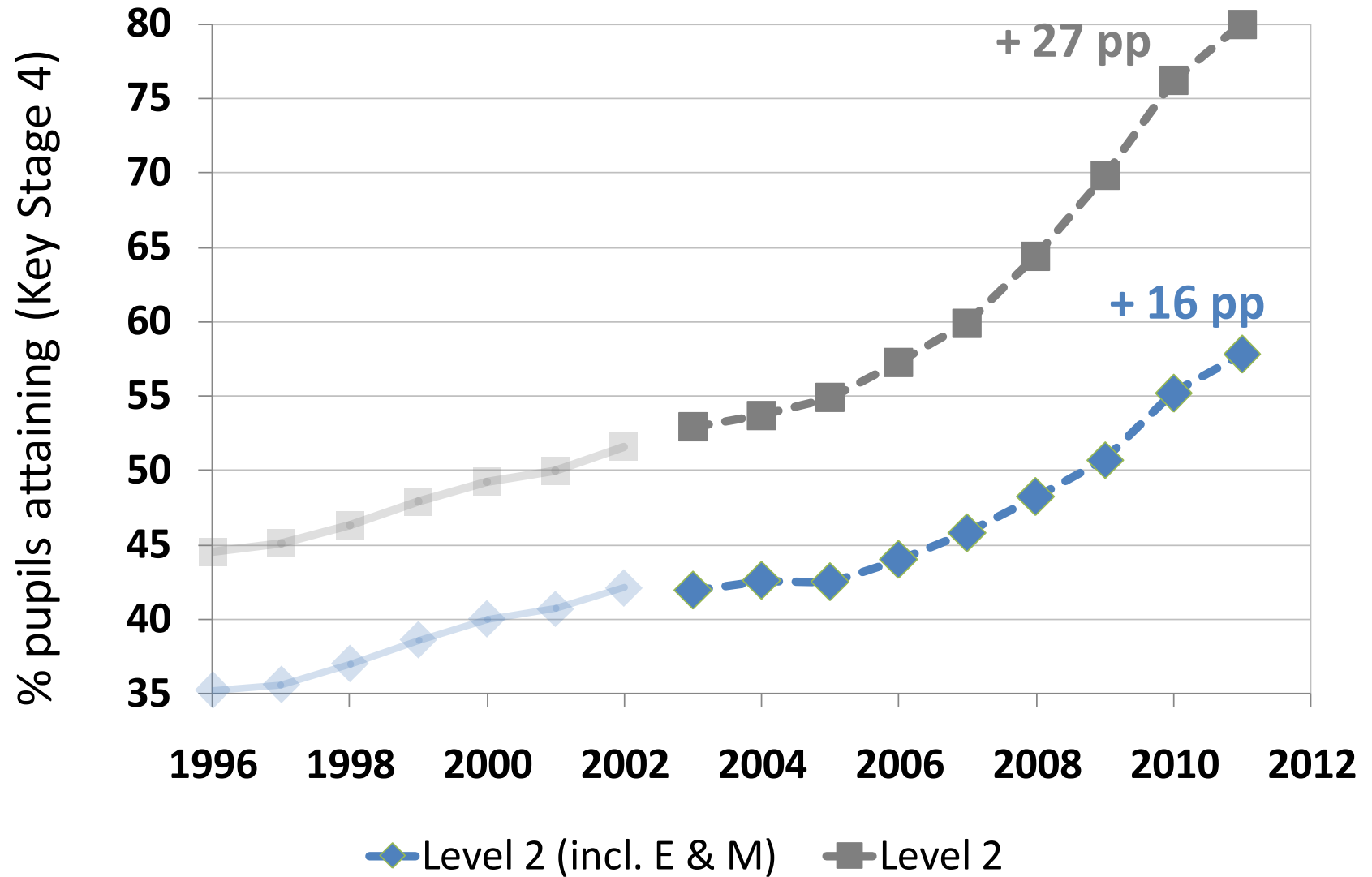
- Originally Key Stage 3 and extended into Key Stage 4
- Later complemented with 'Challenge' programmes
- Covered 'the basics':
  - Monitoring and assessment
  - Teaching and learning
  - Pupil-level interventions
  - Attendance and behaviour

### Approach

- Core subjects: English, maths and science
- Consultant teachers/advisers
- Materials and toolkits
- In-school training
- National and regional events
- Best practice and knowledge sharing



# Schools saw increasing gains in Key Stage 4 outcomes



And, evaluation and inspection highlight the reasons behind it

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- **Leadership** – improved, especially monitoring and quality assurance
- **Teaching and learning** – quality improved, broader range of teaching strategies deployed and emphasis on pupil thinking skills
- **Assessment for learning** - better use of data and tracking progress to target resource
- **Behaviour and attendance** – improvement in strategies and protocols



But, the situation has to be right for such strategies to work

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## Criteria to test:

1. Is the **timing** right?
2. Are **standards** too low?
3. Is **variation** in standards too high?
4. Is **capacity** and quality too weak and variable?
5. Is the **system** designed for national delivery?



# 1. The **timing** was right for standardised approaches

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**Poor to fair**  
'Achieving the basics of literacy & numeracy'

- Motivation & scaffolding for low skill teachers
- Minimum standards
- Getting students in seats

**Fair to good**  
'Getting the foundations in place'

- Sharp analysis & accountability
- Financial & organisational foundation
- Better teaching & learning

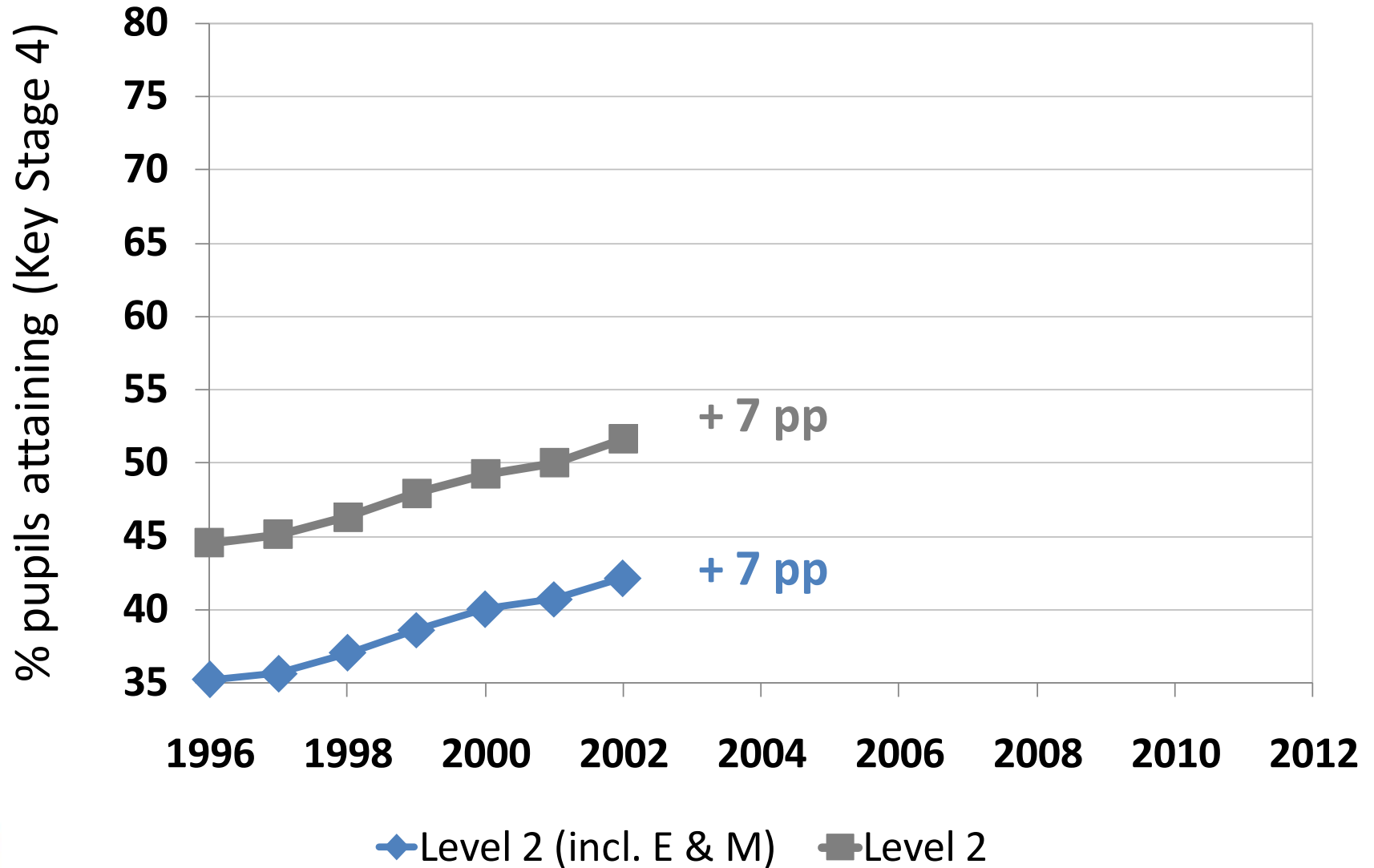
**Good to great**  
'Shaping the professional'

- High quality teachers & leaders
- School based decision making

**Great to excellent**  
'Improving through peers & innovation'

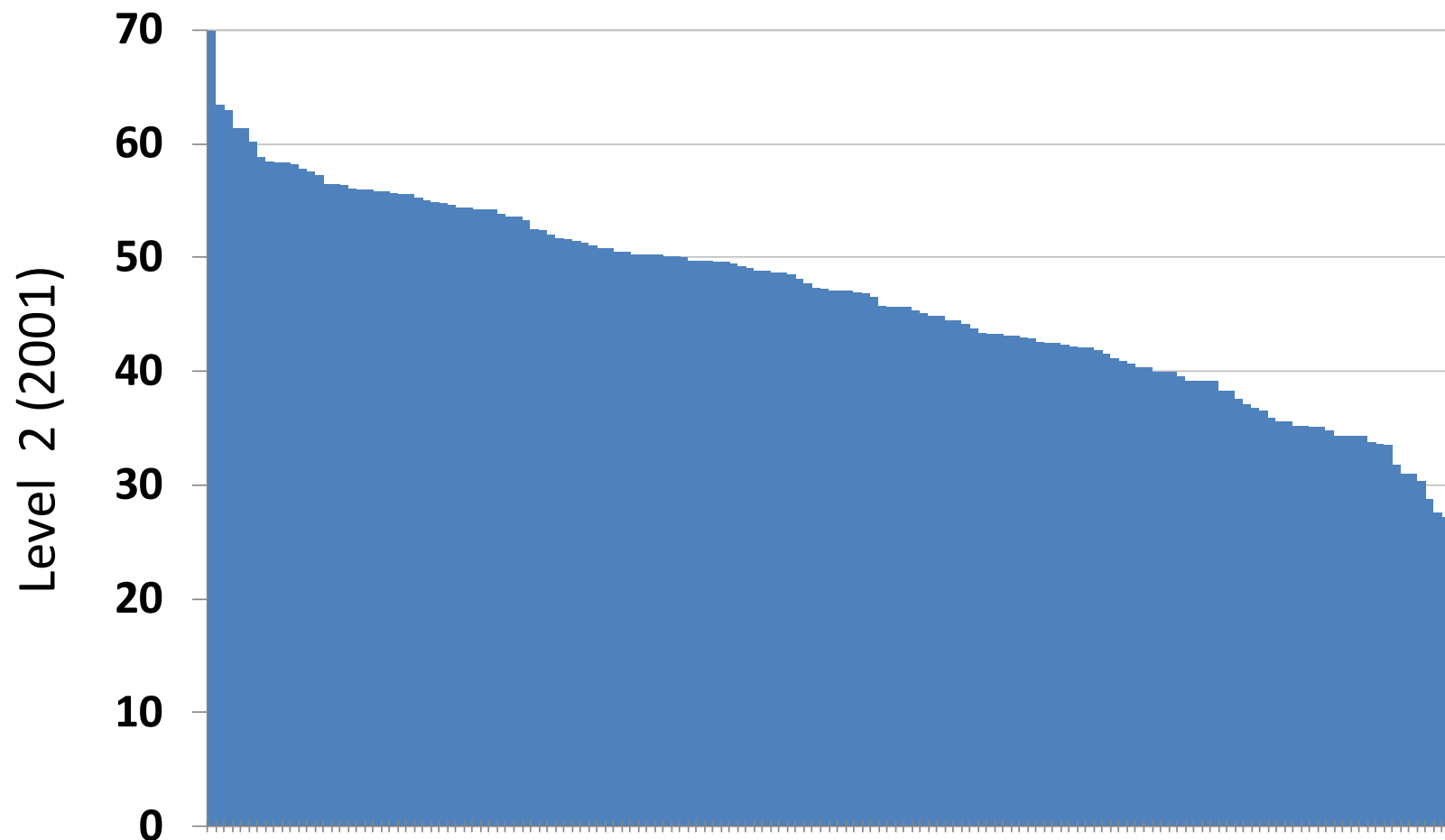
- Building system capacity
- Creating additional support mechanisms
- System-sponsored experimentation

## 2. Standards were low at Key Stage 4



### 3. Variation was high – Level 2 ranged from 27% to 64%

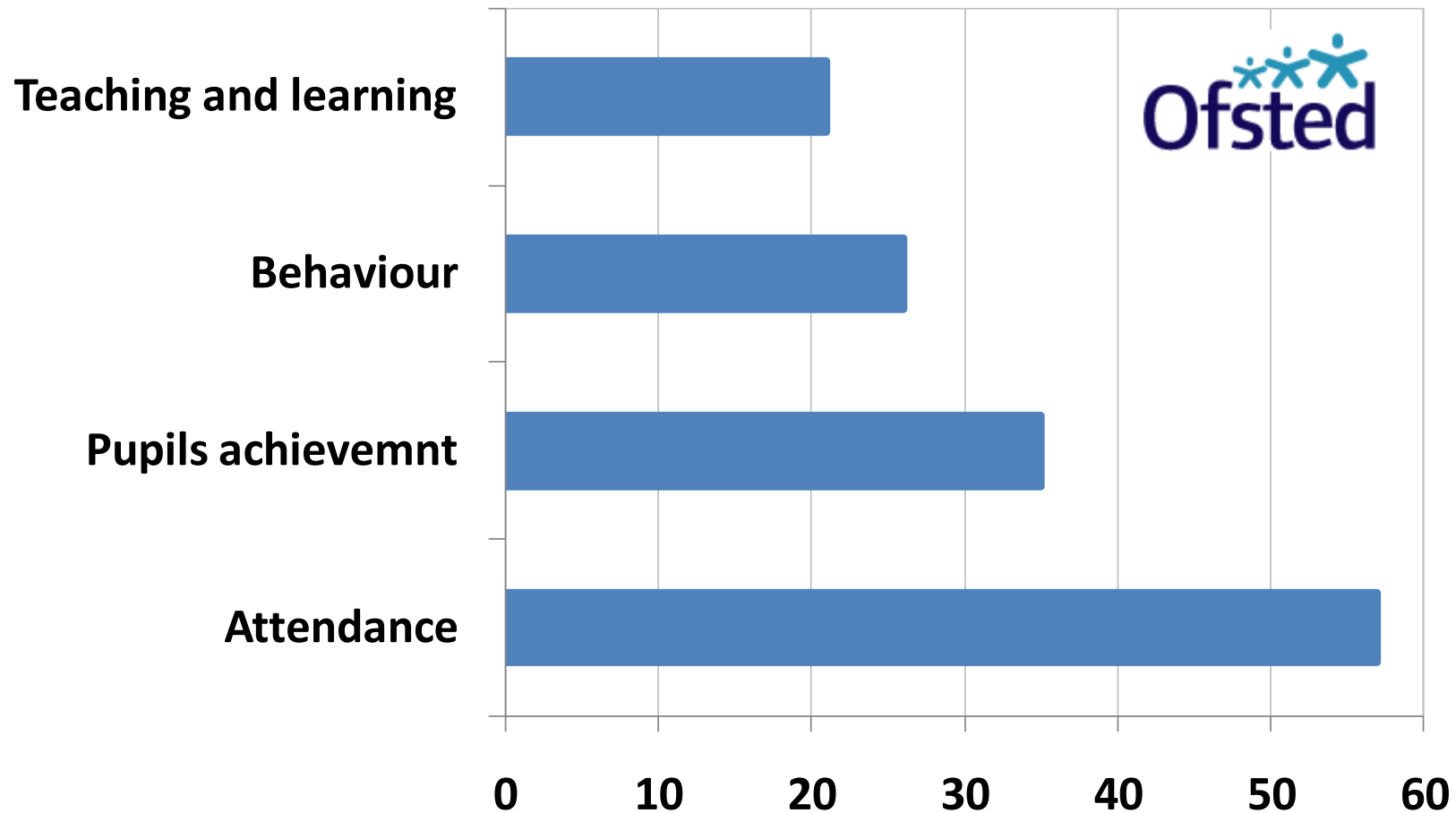
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Local Authorities in England (n = 150)

## 4. Capacity in too many schools was 'satisfactory'

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% secondary schools satisfactory or worse (Ofsted, 2001)

## 5. The **system** was designed for 'national' delivery

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### Delivery Challenge

Systematic quality practice implemented across 150 Local Authorities, 3,460 schools, 200,000 FTE teachers and 3.25 m pupils

#### Agencies



#### Policy

- PSA targets
- League Tables
- National direction
- Large investment

#### Capacity



- National and local
- Materials
- Training

# Evaluations highlight lessons learned about implementation

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- **Leadership** - impact greatest where school leadership and management is good
- **Hearts and minds** – not enough was done to motivate schools to use the strategies
- **Initiative overload** – guidance and materials became daunting over time
- **Adapting approaches** – the best schools adapted approaches to their context and improved on them while others limited their impact through inappropriate alteration
- **Training models** – in-school support and challenge more effective than external courses and training



# England has now moved away from national strategies

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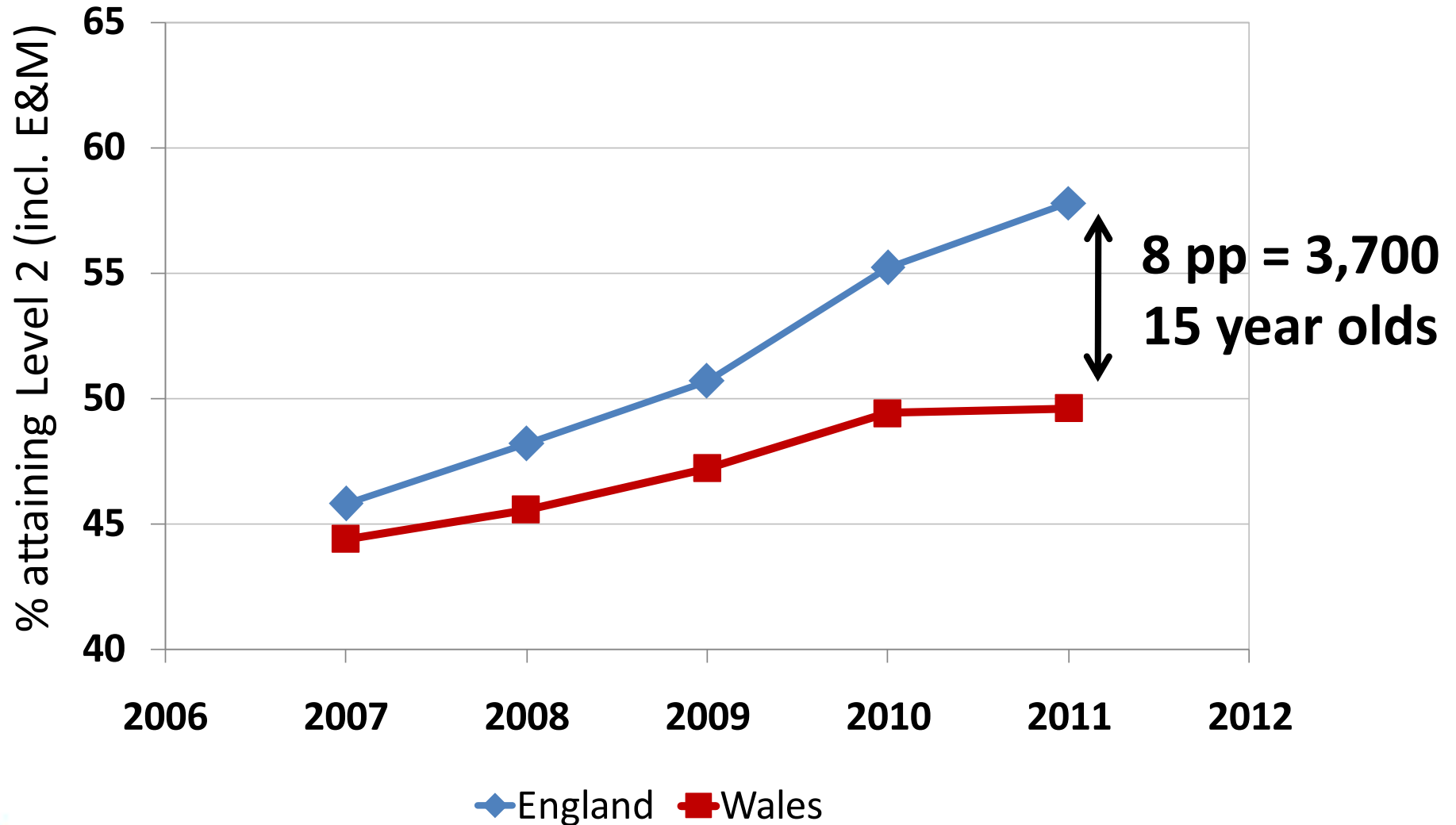
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# Alternative question – ‘does Wales need national strategies’?



No, the moment has passed ....

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## Criteria to test:

1. Is the **timing** right? **No, a different implementation path is the focus**
2. Are **standards** too low? **Yes, but not as low as in 2001 in England**
3. Is **variation** in standards too high? **Yes, but half that in England in 2001**
4. Is **capacity** and quality too weak and variable? **Yes, but large investment in PLC and system leadership approaches**
5. Is the **system** designed for national delivery? **No, but regional consortium need to deliver**



But some of the underlying principles apply

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## **How to get an extra 3,700 pupils to Level 2 (incl. E/W & M)?**

### **Data and tracking**

- How many are on track to get Level 2 incl. E/W, not maths?
- Do you know who they are and tracking them?

### **Interventions**

- Do you have an effective Y11 math intervention?
- Do you lead rigorous implementation and monitor impact?

### **Teaching and learning**

- What does an outstanding maths department look like?
- Is at least 80% of teaching consistently good or better?

